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WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE,

AND

WOMAN

IN HER SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC CHARACTER.

WOMAN

AS

SHE SHOULD BE.

I THE APPROPRIATE SPHERE OF WOMAN.
II THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON WOMAN
III THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF WOMAN

BY

REV. HUBBARD WINSLOW

ALSO,

WOMAN

IN HER

SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC CHARACTER.

BY

MRS. JOHN SANDFORD.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

The three first chapters of this volume were originally prepared and preached by the author to his people, in a course of evening lectures, without any expectation of publishing them. The circumstances of the times led to the publication of the first one, in the Religious Magazine and separately. It has been some time out of print, and several individuals have signified a request that the other two might be published in connection with another edition of it. They have been accordingly submitted to the publishers, to be issued in the present form and connection. The first chapter is designed to indicate the sphere in which Christianity instructs woman to move and act; the second, to show what Christianity has done for her, and to exhibit the reasons why more women than men become pious; the third, to illustrate what is implied in the true Christian education of woman. I have employed the Saxon term, *woman*, considering it to be in truer taste, though less in use, than the somewhat vulgarized term *lady*.

It is well known, that as the savage and pagan state is to women one of peculiar depression, so to

them the civilized and refined state is attended with some peculiar liabilities to enervation and degeneracy; and that through their degeneracy, in no small degree, comes the downfall of states and nations. There is an insatiate yawning gulf, into which indolence, luxury, extravagance, and dissipation have plunged many a nation of high hopes and attainments; and these have had their origin and countenance, in a great measure, in the false education and habits of the better sex. I have endeavored to set forth the dangers to our rising country from this source, and to show how they may be avoided; to present to the minds of "our daughters" an object worthy of their loftiest and most benevolent ambition, and to show them how they may obtain it; to convince them that the right cultivation and truest excellence of the female character lie at a much higher point than has been usually supposed; and to set before them the means and motives to become (in that elevated and holy state of society called the kingdom or reign of Christ, to which we aspire, and which we confidently expect) "as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace." If the design is effectual to its object in any degree, the author's humble efforts will be well rewarded.

H. W.

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THE

APPROPRIATE SPHERE OF WOMAN.

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1 TIM. ii. 11, 12. **Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.**

THE dignity and virtue of the female character cannot be too highly estimated nor too sacredly protected. It is often and perhaps justly remarked, that as woman was first in transgression, so she is first in obedience; as she was first to introduce sin, so she is first to expel it. She is undoubtedly to sustain a most important part in reclaiming the world. Her influence upon society is great, peculiar, indispensable to its highest elevation. She is capable of exerting a benign and almost irresistible dominion over the affections and the conduct of the other sex; but she can do it only by observing her appropriate sphere and putting forth her characteristic graces.

The sacred writers have intimated that her constitutional susceptibility and ardor, so valuable when wisely directed and so evil when misguided, her spi-

rit of impulse and action, her passion for novelty and adventure predominating over cool discretion and cautious judgment,—as seen in the case of the first transgression,—is one essential reason why God requires that she shall "learn in silence with all subjection," and does not "suffer her to teach nor to usurp authority over the man."

But this law of female subjection, implanted in the human constitution and enjoined by God, is misapprehended, perverted or abused in all but Christian nations. All pagan religions crush the female sex into the dust; Mohammedanism makes them little superior to abject slaves; and even the Jewish economy is inferior to the Christian in respect to their elevation and influence. It is a distinguishing glory of Christianity that it elevates females to their proper rank and full measure of influence in the best and most finished state of society.

All great practical errors, which obtain ascendency over nations and over successive generations of men, have their foundation in certain truths;—they are the misapprehension and abuse of principles true to nature. Now Christianity does not come to make war upon nature and to *extirminate* those principles, but to *restore* them to our right apprehension and to their true application. This is eminently the case in regard to the appropriate sphere of action and influence for the female sex. Nature had assigned to them a sphere distinct from and subordinate to that of man, though by no means less honorable and

important. Paganism had abused this principle of female subordination, so as to abase her, who was made to be "an help-meet" for man, to a condition of invidious inferiority and even of servile abjectness. Look at the condition of females in the Roman empire at the time Christianity was introduced. Christianity removed the hand which pressed them down, and bade them rise to their appropriate sphere. But the reaction from long restraint and depression, the impulse of sudden elevation in their enthusiastic temperaments, soon carried them *beyond* their proper sphere, and produced a spirit of insubordination. They became radical. They were for levelling all distinctions between the sexes. Overstepping their own boundaries, they began to assume the prerogatives of the other sex.

To correct this alarming evil called for some of the most vigorous and burning strokes of the inspired pen. A tendency to ultraism is not peculiar to our day. Apostles, reformers, holy men of other ages, no sooner inculcated something true and important, than zealots began to push it to those extremes which called for scarcely less effort to keep it in its right place than was required to introduce it. If it was an abuse of nature and a horrible evil that woman should be depressed, scarcely less so was the opposite extreme, the process of unsexing, by which the peculiar attractions of the female character are sacrificed, and the way thus prepared for the annihilation of the domestic ties and relations.

Although moral goodness is essentially the same in all, consisting in love to God and man, manifested in action, yet nothing is clearer than that woman was to move in a different sphere from that of man, and her moral virtues are to be modified by and adapted to the sphere in which she was made to move. If modesty and delicacy are becoming in both sexes, they are eminently the ornament of the female sex; while all the moral virtues of either sex, though they bear the same name in each, are to assume the masculine or the feminine character according to the sex in which they exist. The same act which would be modest and delicate in a man would not always be so in a woman; while, on the other hand, what may be very bold and energetic in a woman, might be very tame in a man. It is on this principle that we are accustomed to say of the man who partakes of the character appropriate to females, that he is *effeminate;* and also of the woman who partakes of the character appropriate to males, that she is *masculine.* These terms, we all know, are intended to designate something out of place, something undesirable and unlovely. We tolerate here and there an anomaly of this kind; but we wish to see such cases "few and far between." We should wisely consider the end of all things not far distant should they become universal.

It may be difficult to trace the precise line of demarkation where the masculine character ends and where the feminine begins; but the general

distinctions between them, as well as the dangers to which females are exposed in this particular, are abundantly exhibited in the sacred Scriptures. As I wish to be guided by the counsels of divine wisdom in this somewhat delicate yet highly important subject, I would proceed to call your attention "to the law and to the testimony." It is my simple aim to expound and apply the lessons of the Bible upon the subject before us.

"Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." 1 Cor. xiii. 34. Here it is declared to be according to the divine law that females should observe silence in the churches, and act in subordination to the authority of man. "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." 1 Cor. xiv. 35. It is here asserted to be inconsistent with female delicacy and modesty that they should speak in public. No exclusive reference is had to what is sometimes called a "church meeting." The apostle asserts a general principle for general reasons, as we shall see. There is no mystical reason why a woman should not speak in an assembly of the church rather than in any other assembly; nay, there are some reasons why it would be safer and more proper for her to speak in a meeting of the church than in a promiscuous assembly. This the apostle implies in a subsequent pas-

sage, as we shall show; and if she ought not so much as to ask a question in a public meeting, but should do even that privately at home, much less ought she to undertake to advance her own opinions, and to dictate instructions and rules to others.

It appears that there were some among the primitive matrons who, moved by a false zeal, encouraged the younger sisters in defaming and falsely accusing those who did not adopt their views and conform to their wishes; the tendency of whose conduct was to displace sober-mindedness, to alienate wives from their husbands, children, and domestic duties, to promote indelicacy and a fondness of being from home; insomuch that the pure lustre of Christianity was tarnished and the gospel reproached. Hence the apostle said to a minister of the gospel, "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine; that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in patience; the aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Titus ii. 1—5. The same apostle animadverts in terms of unqualified rebuke upon those who, meddling with things without their proper sphere, spend their time, as he expresses it, in "wandering about from house to house; and not

only idle, but tattlers also, and busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not." 1 Tim. v. 13.

The duty of wives to be subject to their husbands and to reverence them is inculcated in the following strong language. While instructing husbands to love their wives as their own bodies, instead of treating them as the heathen do theirs, the apostle says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Eph. v. 22—24, 33. "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man." "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause the woman ought to have power on her head, because of the angels." 1 Cor. xi. 3, 8—10. That is, she ought to have a covering or veil on her head, in sign that she is under the power of her husband, on account of the irreligious who came to their assemblies as spies or lookers on. Here then is a promiscuous assembly, not an exclusive meeting of the church, and the apostle teaches us that here she must not only be in silence, but must even have on

the then customary badge of modesty and subjection.

Such then are inspired views respecting female delicacy and propriety, respecting her becoming deference to the other sex, and her appropriate reverence and homage to her husband. She is even represented as the glory of her husband, as he is the glory of God. "For as much," says the apostle, "as he is the image and the glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man." How any person of sober mind can read such scriptures and not perceive that they recognise an important distinction between the appropriate virtues and duties of the sexes, I am unable to perceive. The doctrine is however by some confidently sustained and acted on, that all this distinction is artificial, unchristian, an invidious prejudice, and ought to be broken down.

In his epistle to Timothy the apostle gives the following instruction: "In like manner also that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or with gold, or pearls, or costly array, but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." 1 Tim. ii. 9—14. Here the inspired writer instructs us that

women should clothe themselves with *modest* apparel, not with those glaring and gaudy trappings which attract vulgar and wanton eyes, as the heathen women do; and, further, that in public they should always be learners and never teachers, and that they should never assume the position of dictation or of authority over man. As a reason for this, he reminds us that Adam was first formed; that Eve was then formed, to be his *help meet*, and not his *teacher* or *governess;* and as a further reason why woman should be slow to dictate and ready to learn in all matters of doubtful expediency or questionable right, he reminds us that her characteristic ardor and imprudence, her love of novelty and change, had once betrayed her into transgression—that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression;" thus intimating that had she kept her proper place and been guided by the man, instead of attempting to guide him, the great disaster would not have befallen our race. The general idea is clearly maintained, that as man is possessed of a strong desire to gratify the woman, insomuch that he is liable to dethrone his better judgment and to follow her wishes, even if she leads him astray, as in the case of Adam and Eve, it is imminently dangerous that she, whose predominant characteristic is not so much sound and comprehensive judgment as curiosity and romantic impulse, should assume the reins. Thus, if language has any definite meaning, the Bible seems clearly to

teach that man should always sit at the helm, to lead public sentiment and control public movements; while woman was to move in another but not less important or honorable sphere, where she was to put forth the peculiar and powerful influences of her personal virtues and acquirements.

The apostle says, "I suffer not a woman to teach," &c. The term *teach* is the same as that employed by Christ when he said, "Go ye and teach," or disciple, "all nations," &c. This commission was given exclusively to *men*. Christ had many excellent female disciples, but to none of them did he extend this commission; and the apostle reminds some of the primitive sisters of this fact, at a time when they seem to have been inclined to forget it. This remembrancer still speaks, and his message is as important and as binding as ever.

The physical constitution of the sexes plainly indicates that, as a general rule, the more severe manual labors, the toils of the field, the mechanic arts, the cares and burdens of mercantile business, the exposures and perils of absence from home, the duties of the learned professions, devolve upon man; while the more delicate and retired cares and labors of the household devolve upon woman.

The intellectual and moral constitution of the sexes, as well as the Bible, instructs us that all the affairs of state, both civil and political, all the affairs of the church as respects both government and public teaching, all the enterprises for evangelizing and

reforming the world, all the more public, literary and religious institutions, especially those embracing both sexes, should be headed and controlled by man; while the more modest and retiring, though not less valuable and powerful, influences of her personal character and conversation upon her domestic circle, her neighbors and associates, and through them upon the world, together with the fruits of her intellect, imparted not in public lectures, but by private instruction, or communicated to the world through the medium of the press, belong to woman.

The appropriate sphere and distinguishing duties of woman are then as follows:—Having given herself up to God, her first duty is *to take care of her own house.* Having severely rebuked the conduct of those who, leaving the domestic duties, wander about from house to house, idle, tattlers, busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not, the apostle adds, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, *guide the house;* give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." 1 Tim. v. 14. Nor let any woman pronounce this an invidious and menial sphere of duty. Let her but consider how much the happiness of society and the progress of the world in all that is good depend upon domestic causes. Let her also know in what admiration she is held by those whose respect is most to be valued, who, on entering her house, behold an abode of neatness, order, cheerfulness, and hospitality · her children well clad and smiling, her

table neatly spread with wholesome provisions, and every thing about her seeming to say, "Here is my happiness; my husband is my best companion, my children are my jewels; my house is my home, and no earthly pleasure excels that of rendering it a domestic paradise—a centre of attraction to my family, so that they are nowhere else so happy; a place too of welcome and grateful reception to the stranger"—and she will see that this is second to no other secular sphere for honor or importance; that she has no occasion to covet the chairs of state or the noisy scenes of public action. She will be satisfied with the inspired description of woman in her true glory,—although the progress of art has somewhat changed her occupation, yet the general duty is still essentially the same,—"She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." Observe the husband, not the wife, is seen in the gates, the places of concourse, and is known by his respectable appearance imparted by the domestic virtues of his wife; so that all who see him say, "There is the man who has a good wife to take care of him." "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and deli-

vereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, *but thou excellest them all.*" Prov. xxxi.

While thus administering neatness, order, comfort and happiness to her household, her hands may also go forth to embrace the poor and the afflicted; she may, as did the holy women who attended on the ministry of Christ and his apostles, make coats and garments for the destitute, and visit the houses of sorrow and of want with her tender sympathies and benevolent aid. Thus the same passage of scripture which describes the domestic virtues says also, as we have seen, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she stretcheth forth her hands to the needy."

But let it not be supposed that her agency is to be restricted to mere temporal affairs. She ought not, like a sister of old, to be "cumbered with much serving," to the neglect of other and higher duties. To "look well to the ways of her household and eat not the bread of idleness," to see that whatever her husband provides tells to advantage in the neat and tasteful apparel, the well-spread table, the comfort and happiness of her family, is of course a duty

never to be neglected; but more, much more than this, remains for her to do. It is hers also to nourish and adorn the young and growing *minds;* to cause her *instructions* to distil upon them as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers that water the earth; to bend and direct the infant twig in the way it should grow, that it may shoot erect towards heaven; to put forth a mother's restraining and elevating influence upon her sons, that they "may be as plants grown up in their youth," and to bestow a mother's peculiar guardianship and delicate care upon her daughters, that "they may be as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace;" to exert a holy influence upon her husband, and by her sweet and tender sympathies to calm his anxious mind, smooth his ruffled brow, and cheer him on in the path of self-denying duty and of high endeavor; to diffuse all around her, as she mingles in society, the pure and mighty influences of female piety, always savoring of delicacy, modesty, good sense, intelligence, and transparent benevolence; and all this, if you please, adorned with a finished culture, sparkling with chastened and refined wit, and attended with whatever may be most attractive and commanding in the peculiar graces and beauties of the female character. These are the noblest virtues of woman; these are what render her what she was made to be, if we may credit the Bible, the help that is "meet" or suitable for man—such a help as he needs. And

who will say that they are not as important, as honorable, as elevated, and that they do not invite and give ample scope to as high intellectual and moral cultivation, as the distinguishing duties of men?

How sadly then do they mistake who suppose that the sacred writers depress the female sex when they so much restrict their influence to personal, essential, intrinsic elevation and goodness. This is in fact the only true excellence, the most glorious of all power. Even the *man* who must needs stretch for an office, or covet some public notoriety, to make himself felt in the world, or to secure honor, is but a sorry man; how much more is she but a sorry *woman* who must needs resort to these adventitious means of influence or distinction. No: so far from depressing the female sex, it was the wise intent of Providence in this arrangement to *elevate* her to the highest point of the most excellent worth and influence; to protect her, who was to be the model of all that is lovely in character and the source of the most transforming and benign influence upon the world, from all temptation to seek the more outward and vulgar forms of honor—to shine in the adventitious distinctions of office, to challenge for her fair name a place in the rude ballot-box, or among the candidates for public office, or in the noisy halls of state; to covet for herself a share with those who would shine in public exploits. Hers was to be pre-eminently the *intrinsic* worth, the *essential* honor, the

pure *moral* influence of *personal excellence;* always unaspiring, always modest and delicate, always gentle and kind, always full of mercy and good fruits; whose subject is always most loved and admired where most known, and of course always most loved and admired *at home*, and then by all who know her. Who can tell how great the influence, how wide and lasting the blessing, which the woman of such a character will bequeath to the world, or how radiant the glory with which Christ will adorn her head in the last day?

But oh how fallen from this high elevation is she when, impatient of her proper sphere, she steps forth to assume the duties of the man, and, impelled by false zeal, with conscience misguided, does as even man ought not to do—when, forsaking the domestic hearth, her delicate voice is heard from house to house, or in social assemblies, rising in harsh unnatural tones of denunciation against civil laws and rulers, against measures involving political and state affairs of which she is nearly as ignorant as the child she left at home in the cradle, against churches and ministers, perhaps her own pastor, and certainly all who dissent from her views; expecting to reform politics and churches, and to put down every real and supposed evil in them, by the right arm of female power, and clamorous for the organization of female societies for this specific object; not slow to anathematize all who do not submit to her dictation, in the stereotype phraseology of certain modern

charity, as "time-serving men" and "canting hypocrites;" and withal very sure that the world will never go right till women take the lead! What a sad wreck of female loveliness is she then! She can hardly conceive how ridiculous she appears in the eyes of all sober, discreet, judicious Christian men, or how great the reproach she brings upon her sex. Despite of gallantry, her power over the minds of men is then at an end; she must henceforth "fight as one that beateth the air." Men will smile or pity, and let her pass on; for to expostulate or argue they will soon find to be in vain, inasmuch as she is certainly right, has nothing to learn, and is bent only on teaching.

But I would treat this subject with great tenderness. Many of those who have fallen into this mistaken and unhappy course were originally moved by good feelings and benevolent motives. But they fell under the influence of bad teachers. Some flaming periodical or plausible and exciting lecturer kindled up a false fire in their too credulous and susceptible but well meaning bosoms. They are misguided. They verily think they are "doing God service." They perhaps even covet to be "persecuted for righteousness' sake," and consider every effort to correct their way as this kind of persecution. They very sincerely suppose that they are far in advance of their unenlightened, less philanthropic, or more timid sisters. They are willing to brave public sentiment at all hazards. They have entire confidence

in the righteousness and the success of their cause. As to their logic and their arguments, they cannot be resisted; they have already seen some strong men "quail under them." They have only to go forward with increasing effort—to throw themselves boldly into this Thermopylæ. The sacrifice is demanded, and they are ready to make it. They unfortunately suppose that the public odium which they encounter for stepping out of their appropriate sphere is nothing more nor less than the hostility of sin to the cause of truth and righteousness. Far be it from me to impugn motives so long as any favorable construction remains for them; and those persons who are actuated by such views and motives as these are surely rather to be pitied than reproached.

Some will only be spurred on to more desperate steps by whatever may be said to restrain them; others will see their error, retreat to their appropriate sphere, and recover the character which they had wellnigh lost. To some a faithful exposition of the gospel upon this subject, as well as upon all others, will prove a "savor of life unto life;" to others, of "death unto death." But here, as in all other cases, our hope is mainly to save those who are not far gone and fully committed, and who of course are yet susceptible to instructions from the Bible respecting their duty. So long as they retain the characteristic graces of their sex in lively exercise, so long as delicacy and modesty and the finer feelings of retiring and unostentatious benevolence

have the ascendency over them, if they are well informed of what is passing, they will be quick to discern the meaning and the importance of the inspired lessons upon this subject. Such, in a high degree, God be thanked, is still the character of most of the female sex in our country.

But those females who suppose that no bad influences are at work among them, who suppose that no alarming danger threatens them, who suppose that there are as yet none on whom the inspired rebukes upon this subject justly fall, and who of course suppose that such cautions and admonitions as this discourse humbly attempts are uncalled for, have not diligently observed the "signs of the times." It may be very well. They have been, perhaps, attending exclusively to their own affairs; and the very fact that they do not at once see the importance or the application of these instructions, may be evidence that they themselves do not need them except as preventives. The principle of prevention, rather than of cure, is the apology for presenting this subject at the present time. It may not be the duty of every person to watch the signs of the times, but it is certainly the duty of some to do it; and those whom God has set expressly as watchmen to his people, and to whom he has said, "Hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me," must not withhold the warning when they see the evil approaching. They must anticipate its arrival. Let the admonitions of the gospel upon this subject

go before and prevent the threatening evil. Let its salutary voice of warning be heard in all the land before the plague has spread over it and killed, wherever it can, the "presiding genius" and the "potent charm" of the "fair sex," and thus laid all domestic piety and happiness, nay the domestic constitution itself, in a deep and dark grave. For surely as this unsexing process goes on till it becomes universal, not an individual will remain for man to love with the true conjugal affection, unless himself first becomes a woman. Have we yet to learn that similar magnets repel?

And even if man could succeed to engage his affections to so unnatured and repulsive an object as a woman that has lost the characteristic graces of her sex, who in his right mind would hazard his hand and happiness with one that has already entered upon a course so ominous of domestic trouble? Is it not well known by the cautious observer, that the woman who is what the apostle calls "a busy-body in other men's matters" has left an unhappy home?—first rendered such by her own neglect or indiscretion or peevishness, and from which she now flees in search of happiness. Depend upon it, it is generally the case that the woman who is much abroad has left an unhappy home.

It may be supposed by some that these instructions have no application to any but *married* females. It is true that those who have no families to care for may have more time than wives and mothers have

to devote to matters abroad. But how many have not parents, or brothers or sisters, or home, to bless with most of their presence and attentions? Those who can command a larger part of their time to devote to christian conversation and to deeds of kindness and charity abroad, in ways comprehended in the appropriate sphere of female action, may consider it their privilege and duty to do it. It is our happiness to know some such women, who, although not mothers of families, are "mothers in Israel," whose characters savor of nothing but the strictest female propriety and the highest excellence, whose time is nevertheless mostly devoted to benevolent deeds among the ignorant, the destitute, the vicious, or the afflicted. Such are deserving of all praise. Those who would see one of the happiest illustrations of this will do well to read the life of Hannah More.

It is unnecessary to attempt to define the exact line over which the graces of female character forbid woman to step, but from the scriptures which we have introduced we may easily trace its general direction. It respects both the things which she does and her manner of doing them.

To perform deeds of personal charity and kindness to the destitute and afflicted; to converse modestly or to employ the pen upon subjects which engage her mind and interest her heart; to assist in the circulation of approved religious tracts; to act the part of a personal or a private teacher, whether

secular or religious; to engage in small social circles of her own sex in the duties of devotion and of christian conversation; to solicit charity for approved benevolent objects, by private application—deeds like these, if performed with the spirit and manner which become her, appear to be comprehended within the sphere which the Scriptures assign to the female sex; and I know of no female virtue on which they necessarily encroach.

But when females undertake to assume the place of public teachers, whether to both sexes or only to their own; when they form societies for the purpose of sitting in judgment and acting upon the affairs of the church and state; when they travel about from place to place as lecturers, teachers, and guides to public sentiment; when they assemble in conventions to discuss questions, pass resolutions, make speeches, and vote upon civil, political, moral, and religious matters; when they begin to send up their names to gentlemen holding official stations, gravely declaring their own judgment in regard to what they ought to do, and informing them, with solemn menace, what they have themselves determined to do if they do not yield to their wishes—even to repeat the expression of their sentiments until they *do* yield; when they attempt the reformation of morals by engaging in free conversation and discussion upon those things of which the apostle says "it is a shame even to speak;" when they encourage meetings and measures like the above, either by their presence,

countenance, or service;—in short, when the distinguishing graces of modesty, deference, delicacy, and sweet charity are in any way displaced by the opposite qualities of boldness, arrogance, rudeness, indelicacy, and the spirit of denunciation of men and measures, so that they give any just occasion for being denominated, by way of distinction, "the female brethren"—it is then no longer a question whether they have stretched themselves beyond their measure and violated the inspired injunction which saith, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

And why should any woman thus sacrifice herself? Does duty demand it? Must she do it for conscience' sake? However good the object, it cannot be duty to seek its promotion by such means as these. The end can never justify the means, in the estimation of any whose conscience is not perverted. Does she do it for the sake of the suffering or the oppressed, or to correct moral evils and exterminate vice? There is "a more excellent way" to do this, and also at the same time to promote and elevate her own character; a way clearly indicated, as we have seen, in the word of God. It can never be the duty of any one to attempt to benefit others at the sacrifice of her own character. Is her object personal distinction? Let her contemplate such characters as Hannah More and Isabella Graham, than which lovelier and brighter never shone upon

earth, in contrast with those who have acquired an unenviable distinction in these unchristian ways—the Royals and the Darusmonts of our day—and she may see that the surest way to true glory is the one ordained for her by God. The world has had enough of Fanny Wrights; whether they appear in the name of avowed infidelity, or of civil and human rights, or of political economy, or of morals and religion, their tendency is ultimately the same—the alienation of the sexes, the subversion of the distinguishing excellence and benign influence of woman in society, the destruction of the domestic constitution, the prostration of all decency and order, the reign of wild anarchy and shameless vice. Thomas Paine could not desire better disciples; nor would it much concern him in what name or cause they might profess to appear, since the ultimate effect is one and the same.

May those who emulate the noble example of the Mores and the Grahams of both continents be greatly multiplied. May the "daughters of America," observant of the true dignity and glory of their sex, consecrating their earliest and best affections to the Savior, increase the excellence and power of their influence a thousand fold. The universal reign of domestic happiness, the end of all oppression, the extermination of vice, the conversion of souls, together with the growing spirituality and vigor of the Christian church—the approach of the Redeemer's kingdom, bringing whatsoever is pure and lovely

and of good report—will then be rapidly hastened. Zion will begin to "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." She will put on her "beautiful garments;" her "righteousness will go forth a brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth;" paradise, lost by the fall, will hasten its return It will then appear that the sacred influence of pious females, acting in their appropriate sphere, is second to no other human influence for excellence or importance in accomplishing the renovation of the world; for "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON WOMAN.

"And of the chief women not a few."

THE abject condition of the female sex in all out Christian countries is universally known and admitted. In all savage and pagan tribes the severest burdens of physical toil are laid upon their shoulders: they are chiefly valued for the same reason that men value their more useful animals, or as objects of their sensual and selfish desires. Even in the learned and dignified forms of eastern paganism, "the wife," says one who has spent seventeen years among them, "is he *slave* rather than the *companion* of her husband. She is not allowed to walk *with* him, she must walk *behind* him—not to eat *with* him, she must eat *after* him, and *eat of what he leaves*. She must not sleep until he is asleep, nor remain asleep after he is awake. If she is sitting and he comes in, she should rise up. She should, say their sacred books, have no other god on earth than her husband. Him she should worship while he lives, and, when he dies, she should

be burnt with him."—"As the widow," in case she is not burnt, "is not allowed to marry again, is often considered little better than an outcast, and not unfrequently sinks into gross vice, her life can scarcely be considered a blessing." The same author remarks that "there is little social intercourse between the sexes, little or no acquaintance of the parties before marriage, and consequently little mutual attachment; and as there is an absolute vacuity and darkness in the minds of the females, who are not allowed even to learn to read, there is no solid foundation laid for domestic happiness."

If we pass into the dominions of the crescent, we find the condition of females, in some respects, rather worse, it would seem, than better. For in pagan India, debased and abused as woman is, she is still allowed some interest in religion, and some common expectations with the other sex concerning the future state. But in Mohammedan countries, even this is nearly or quite denied her. "It is a popular tradition among the Mohammedans, which obtains to this day, that women shall not enter paradise;" and it requires some effort for the imagination to conceive how debased and wretched must be the condition of the female sex, to originate and sustain such a horrible and blasphemous tradition.

Even in the refined and shining ages of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, where the cultivation of letters, the graces of finished style, the charms of poetry and eloquence, the elegancies of architecture, sculpture

painting, and embroidery, the glory of conquest and the pride of national distinction, were unsurpassed by any people before or since, even then and there what was woman but the abject slave of man?—the object of his ambition, or his avarice, or his lust, or his power?—the alternate victim of his pleasure, his disgust, or his cruelty?—the creature of his caprice?—and, what is still worse, the menial slave of her own mental darkness, moral debasement, and vicious indulgences? If history does not lie, the answer is decisive. This, and almost only this, was she.

So far down as the close of the sixteenth century, a Latin author wrote a book to prove that women are not rational beings, have no souls, and that there awaits them no future life or happiness beyond the grave. This may have been intended as a severe humor, a sarcastic argument for a particular end, rather than a serious confirmation of so shocking a dogma; yet such was its influence that Simon Gedicus, a Lutheran divine, deemed it important to write a serious confutation of this work, in 1595, "wherein," says a certain author, "women are restored to the expectation of heaven, on their good behavior."

Such then is the debased and forlorn condition of woman as the ruins of the fall have left her, and wherever the benign influences from a better world have not reached her.

But how gloriously does Christianity reverse all this. As if to set her on high forever, the natural pa-

rent of the world's Savior was a woman;—the tears of joy that bedewed his infant cheeks were a woman's tears;—the arms that fondly clasped the sweet babe, and laid him softly down to slumber in the manger, were a woman's arms;—yes, and it was a woman who first felt the redeeming and elevating power of Christianity, and with exultation sang, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior; for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

Not only was the Savior's childhood protected and blessed by female care, but through his whole life women were in constant attendance upon his ministry. It was woman's hospitality which furnished his table; woman's penitence which washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head; woman's sorrow which bewailed and lamented him, as he ascended with mournful steps to Calvary; woman's love, stronger than death, which followed his body to the sepulchre to see how it was laid; woman's fidelity which prepared spices and ointments to embalm it; woman's faithful piety which was earliest at the sepulchre, had the first view of the risen Savior, and proclaimed the glad tidings to the world.

When, in obedience to the command of their risen Lord, the disciples went forth and proclaimed the gospel, women were among the first and most

zealous believers; and our text records, to the honor of their sex, that when Paul had spent three Sabbaths in one of the chief cities of Macedonia, reasoning with the people out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it was needful that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead, "some of the people believed and joined themselves to Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and *of the chief women not a few.*" They were the *chief* women, and not a *few* of them, that received the Son of God and joined themselves to his people. While, as the context informs, the Jews, who believed not, moved with envy, and certain vile fellows of the baser sort, could find no better thing to do than to lift up their impotent and blood-stained hands against Jesus Christ, these *chief women*, of noble spirit, together with the devout Greeks, gave their hearts and their hands to speed the cause of human redemption.

It has ever been a favorite taunt of infidels and scorners, that Christianity is so much embraced by women. "It is a religion," say they, "for women and children;" thus associating women with children, making puerility of intellect and feebleness of understanding characteristic of their sex. We need not here pause to rebuke the scandal which, in their zeal to injure Christianity, they thus cast upon the female sex; but would only say, that if there were any meaning or force in it, so far from being a reproach to Christianity, it were rather an honor to

the female sex, that so many of them have the discernment and the moral sense to see the beauty and yield to the claims of divine truth.

There are natural reasons, however, as I conceive, why there are more converts to Christianity from among women than men, of such a nature as at once to break the teeth of the infidel's scandal, and take from woman all dangerous occasion for glorying. I suppose the fact that more women than men do become pious, will not be doubted. St. Augustine denominated them in his day, it is said, "the devout sex;" and whether that designation was originally intended only for those specially consecrated or not, it certainly applies with much truth and propriety to the sex, as such, in every age. It is believed that in most of the Christian churches of both continents there are more females than males; and that if the aggregate of all the true believers and faithful followers of Christ upon the face of the earth could be taken, the number from the female sex would much exceed that from the other. But there are causes for this, which go to show that it implies no superiority in the one sex over the other, or any inaptitude in the Christian religion to intellects of both sexes and of all grades.

The principle is this.—Religion does not come and take possession of the human soul by any accident or caprice, nor by any physical violence. It is the result of consideration, thought, reflection, bestowed upon the subject in sufficient relative

measure to secure, through divine influence, the moral change in question. Hence absorbing devotion to any other object, or subjection to any vice, will operate to resist the Spirit and repel religion. The causes by which we are induced to embrace Christianity are of two kinds, natural and supernatural. By the former I designate all that is comprehended in means, by the latter the influence of the Holy Spirit. I believe the latter influence to be always essentially concerned in regeneration, and in every stage of sanctification, but that it ordinarily operates in connection with means. Now if we should suppose the same intellectual adaptation of Christianity to the male as to the female intellect, and the same influence of the divine Spirit upon each, but yet if at the same time the *natural* causes should in the one case be superior to what they are in the other, there would still be seen to be a sufficient reason why there are more numerous examples of Christian piety among women than among men.

Let us then proceed to notice some of the natural causes which operate in favor of female piety.

1. Women are less exposed than men to those *vices* which are incompatible with Christian piety; such as intemperance, licentiousness, gambling, and all kinds of debauchery. The constitution and habits of civilized countries throw up a very high and strong fortification around female virtue. If man is willing to be vicious himself, he is not wil-

ling that woman should be; at least, he will despise her and cast her out from society if she is. Men may indulge in vices to some extent, and yet hold high their heads, and move and shine in society. They may practise them in secret; in places remote from home, where they are not known; under covert of darkness and pretence of business; in company with those whose voices are never heard in the society in which they move;—and even if their vices *are* known, unless they are excessive, the fair sex, so kind and forgiving are they, still admit them into their society, and give them the smile of indulgence.

But these are things which woman cannot do. She cannot, in the first place, *practise* vices without being known, as men can; and, in the second place, if she *is* known to be in any degree vicious—if a *single* vice is found upon her—the star of her beauty is set, her fair name is blighted forever, she is an outcast from society. Hence the footsteps of female virtue are peculiarly guarded, circumspect, cautious; the barrier against vice is too high to scale, the gulf beneath too deep and awful to plunge. Some, indeed, do surmount the barrier and fall; but their fall is like that of Lucifer. They are henceforth known only as objects of commiseration, disgust, and almost hopeless wretchedness. Even the man who seduced her from the paths of virtue is one of the first to despise her and to cast her down to remediless ruin; while he turns away from her, and goes

back into society again, to play the gentleman there!

Now the number of men who indulge in those vices which do not depose them from a standing in society, but which would depose females, is probably considerable; but while they do not exclude them from the society of their fellow-men, they do fatally exclude them from the kingdom of God. It is not necessary that a man, in order to ruin his soul, should indulge in the most open, abominable, detestable excesses of vice; it is only necessary that he should indulge in occasional, concealed, and more refined vices, those which society agrees to wink at. "For this ye know, that no lewd nor unclean person, nor drunkard, nor whatsoever defileth or worketh abomination, hath any part in the kingdom of Christ or of God." Any vice, no matter what its form and complexion, cherished, and not renounced, will exclude a man from the kingdom of God as effectually as if ten thousand iron gates were bolted and barred against him. Hence the Savior said, "If thy right eye shall cause thee to sin, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand shall cause thee to sin, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

29 Suppose, now, that two individuals of similar

mental constitution are sitting under the preaching of the gospel; but the one, in order to become a Christian, must cut off his right hand and pluck out his right eye; the other has no such sacrifice to make. Is it not, then, reasonable to suppose that the same truth, the same argument, the same conviction, and the same measure of divine influence, will be much more likely to secure the conversion of the latter than of the former? Undoubtedly. Such is found to be the fact. And it remains for eternity to reveal thousands of conversions to God from among females as the consequence of that virtue by which, as a sex, they are protected; and thousands of ruined souls from among men, as the fruit of those vices to which, as a sex, they are exposed, and to which they wickedly yield.

2. Women are less exposed than men to the absorbing *passion of gain*. So predominant and ruinous is this passion, that the Scriptures have styled it "the god of this world," and they have represented it as having a mighty influence in blinding the minds of men to the glory of the gospel. "If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them." "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Mammon, you well know, was the Syriac god of wealth.

It devolves mainly upon men to provide for their

families the necessary supports of life. It is theirs to cultivate and dispose of the fruits of the earth; to control the operations and secure the proceeds of the mechanic arts; to prosecute and realize the avails of the learned professions; to move around the wheels of mercantile enterprise and catch the falling bounty; to sieze, with eagle-eye, the distant gain, and speculate in houses and lands and stocks. For woman to do this, would ordinarily be quite out of place and character.

Now how easy and natural it is, in a world like this, fallen as we are, for a reasonable and proper desire of gain, in them so much devoted to it as men are, to degenerate into an *absorbing passion;* so that possession, instead of being made a subordinate *means* to the true end of existence, becomes itself the ultimate object, the god and portion of the soul; to which all that is truly good, both in this life and in that which is to come, must be sacrificed.

What are those *vices*, to which I have just alluded, but constitutional and innocent desires, when rightly restrained and governed, let loose and run mad? And what is the passion of avarice but the same thing? Now are not men immeasurably more exposed and addicted than women to both of these iniquities; and do not both of them equally and fatally exclude the soul from heaven? Hath not the voice of inspiration declared that this idolatrous love of money is a "root of all evil," causing those who indulge it to resist the truth and pierce themselves

through with many sorrows? And does not the very same Scripture say, "This we know, that no lewd nor unclean person, nor *covetous*, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ?"

3. Women are less exposed than men to the lust of *civil power, office, dominion.* In all but hereditary governments, they are entirely excluded from posts of civil distinction; and there, of course, is little or no room for the desire or pursuit of them, since all is hereditary and fixed. I do not say that the desire for a public post of honor and influence is always and of necessity sinful, any more than is the desire for pleasure or for property; but this I say, that in the existing state of the world, when so much chicanery and iniquity are practised to secure office; when, for this object, so much envy, and slander, and shuffling, and strife, and wrath, are indulged; when of the men in power so few regard the precepts of Christianity, and office is so commonly held, not for the public good or the glory of God, but to gratify the lust of power and ambition; it is, as our Savior said of the man devoted to riches, among the almost impossible things for a man in pursuit of a public office to enter the kingdom of heaven. And yet, what multitudes of men in our country whose hearts are at this moment burning with the lust of office! How many have entirely sold themselves to this god! To this they live and breathe and have their being. To this they offer their morning and evening devotions, and pay their costliest sacrifice. It

engages their first and their latest thoughts; it even induces them to profane the Sabbath with the reading of political news, and with forming their unhallowed schemes of ambition; it tempts them to do many things which their own consciences condemn, and which they know full well they must not do, if they would be the followers of Christ. "How can a man repent," one has justly said, "whose soul is engrossed with the wily policy of ambition; who seeks office, fame, applause?—on whose favor flatterers hang, and around whose steps thousands are offering the incense of adulation?—whose very business is a species of evading the right way of honesty, and travelling in just such a devious path as the sinner loves to tread?" "Where is the man that would not rather climb the steeps of praise, with incense burning around him, and the multitude rendering homage at his feet, than be found pleading for mercy with bitter tears, like David, the best of kings, or weeping in the prayer meeting, or in his office, or counting-room?" Upon this great field of public strife, this land of war and blood and death, where such multitudes of men peril their moral interests and even lay down their lives in sacrifice, where the glories of heaven and the terrors of hell are equally unheeded, the gentle and unaspiring steps of woman do not enter. She treads a more quiet and virtuous path, where, instead of the noise of political strife, the shouts of conquest, and the groans of defeat, she is saluted with tidings from a better

world—where the silent and powerful language of truth, the voice of God, the entreaties of the Savior, the deep and solemn echoes from eternity, fall on her listening ear and enter her heart.

4. Women are *more at home* than men. More secluded from the agitations of society, the strifes of ambition, the clamor of business, the excitements and perils of war and of military prowess, she is ordinarily more favorably circumstanced for calm and serious reflection. Less exposed to the feverish air of the world, she is thus enabled to breathe more of the cool and healthful atmosphere of a better clime. Of all places upon earth, the calm domestic retreat, in connection with the sanctuary, is most favorable to virtuous contemplation, to moral elevation, and true Christian piety. It is not in the midst of the rush of business, or the agitations of civil and political life, or the shouts of armies and battles, or any of those out of door scenes in which so large a portion of man's life is spent, that serious and salutary thoughts of God, of death, judgment, and eternity, are wont to visit the soul. No—it is in that more favored place—*home*—nearest the sanctuary and nearest heaven; the rightful dominion of woman; where she passes, unmolested, most of her time; where she finds most of her employment, and where she shines in her purest and brightest lustre. When I preach the gospel to women, I encourage myself with the thought that they will go *home* to *think* upon it; but when I preach the gospel to men,

I am often disheartened with the fear that they will go out into the bustling world and forget it.

5. Women are more exposed than men to those *sufferings* and *trials* which render religion peculiarly acceptable. That sufferings of various kinds are among the means ordained and adapted to bring us to Christ, is a doctrine taught both in the Bible and by our own experience and observation; and that by far the greater portion of human sufferings falls to the female sex, is a fact equally known and admitted.

If we speak of *physical* sufferings, the delicacy and frailty of her frame, the susceptibility of her nervous system, together with the more peculiar and exclusive sufferings of her sex, enhanced and embittered as they are in consequence of the apostasy, according to the declaration, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrows," &c., prolonged through all ages and extending to all ranks and conditions, there is in them much that is calculated to wean her spirit from the flesh, and induce her trembling and anxious soul to seek for sympathy and safety in Christ. While the more sturdy frame and iron nerves of man, and his exemption from the most and the severest of the ills that flesh is heir to, are by him too often perverted to an occasion of forgetting that his breath is in his nostrils and his foundation in the dust.

If we speak of *mental* sufferings, the liveliness and keenness of her susceptibilities; her imminent exposure to those defeats, griefs, and disappointments,

which most severely sting the heart, and for which there is no earthly antidote; the silent anguish of mortified vanity, of cruel neglect, of disappointed love; the bitter sorrows of her soul, while realizing in her own painful experience the utter emptiness and deceitfulness of the world, and not being able, like men, to go out and plunge into the scenes of care and ambition to divert her mind and forget her afflictions; her peculiar helplessness and dependence in her afflictions;—are all calculated to disengage her affections and hopes from earthly things, to lead her chastened and subdued spirit to Jesus, to open her mind to the sweet invitation of his grace, as it falls gently upon her ear, "Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." True she often has her gay morning, but how soon is it frequently overcast; how soon does the beauty fade, the enchantment end, the dream of vanity and of gaiety vanish away! The caprice of human flattery and the treachery of human friendships, are calculated to make her realize the worth of that honor which cannot perish, and the value of that Friend who never forsakes. She turns away from earth, gives her mortal interest up, reclines her head upon the bosom of Jesus, and is happy.

6. Women are more accustomed to *subjection;* men to rule. If a confiding and submissive disposition is characteristic of woman, a dictatorial and unyielding disposition is characteristic of man. The spirit of the Christian religion is a spirit of sub-

jection to a superior and righteous authority. So characteristic is this of true piety, that the first declarations of our Savior pronounced blessings upon the poor in spirit, the meek, the lowly, the submissive, the unaspiring; and so important was the inculcation of this sentiment by example as well as precept, that he declared that he did not himself come to be ministered unto, but to minister—not to *be* served, but to be himself *servant* to all.

Immediately subsequent to the fall it was declared to the woman, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and *he shall rule over thee.*" In every succeeding age and nation, this declaration has been verified. And the new dispensation, not repealing this ordinance, requires it as a Christian duty of women to be obedient unto their husbands. In the ordinary and more appropriate state of things, it is man's to assume authority and hold dominion, in every condition, from the family up to the throne of nations. It is his, more appropriately, to sway the sceptre over empires; to head and control armies; to preside in courts; to enact laws; to direct the civil and social affairs of his town or neighborhood; to govern his own household. Now the pride of dominion, the liberty and the disposition to govern rather than to *be* governed in the secular affairs of the world, is too often made an occasion among men of inducing them to resist the yoke of the divine government, to say of Jehovah and his Anointed, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away

their cords from us." It is represented in the Scriptures as one of the greatest obstacles to the conversion of men to God, that such is their pride of dominion, that they are unwilling to be subject even to the government of Jehovah. Hence the prophet, speaking of the time when this obstacle shall give way before the power of the truth and Spirit of God, declares, "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

When the gospel is preached to women, and they are called upon to submit themselves to the divine government, they are only summoned to do that which is analogous to what they have been doing all their lives long. In infancy and childhood, they are subject to their parents; in maturer years, they are subject to their husbands; in almost all nations and all conditions, the possibility or the acknowledged propriety of dominion is not hers; insomuch that to usurp authority and exercise dominion over men and over society is almost universally acknowledged to be, in a woman, entirely out of place. How much more natural and easy then, humanly speaking, for those thus trained and accustomed to subjection from infancy through all their lives, to become subject to Christ, than for those who could scarcely brook even parental authority in childhood, and whose subsequent life is a constant aspiration after an exercise of supremacy and dominion.

These, I apprehend, are the most important natural causes operating to secure more examples of Christian piety among women than among men. They are of such a nature as to imply no mental imbecility on the part of women, and no intellectual flaws or accommodating weakness in Christianity, as infidelity has sneeringly averred;—they are such as any sound mind, understanding the nature of cause and effect, would expect to result in larger accessions to religion from the female than from the male sex, allowing them to possess the same mental constitution and supposing Christianity to be a system of truth. Thus the calamities of the apostasy, which seem in some respects to have fallen more severely on women than on men, seem to result in securing a larger number of them to that grace which bringeth salvation.

I shall conclude this chapter with two or three inferential remarks.

If Providence has thus rendered it more easy for women to embrace religion than for men, then they are more guilty if they do not. The vigorous intellectual nerve acquired by men in the sharp encounter of life being favorable to the active rather than the passive virtues, gives some peculiar advantages for religion to men, but the advantages decidedly predominate upon the other side; and although Providence has done enough for every individual, whether man or woman, to render impiety inexcusable, yet it is manifest that eminent advan

tages must bring eminent guilt, if they are not improved.

Has Providence thrown a barrier very high and strong around female virtue, thus protecting her in an eminent degree from those vices which repel religion? Has he in a great measure delivered her from exposure to the absorbing passion of gain, the god of this world, which blinds the minds of many that believe not? Has he saved her from the perils attending the race of public ambition, office, power, and dominion? Has he given to her a tender frame, endowed her with keen and lively sensibility, and laid those sufferings and trials upon her which are eminently adapted to make her feel the need of Christ? Has he placed her in those circumstances of subjection, from her youth up, which render subjection to his authority comparatively natural and easy? To persist in impiety against all these, to overleap all these barriers against perdition and still go the downward way to ruin, must involve peculiar guilt and aggravated condemnation.

It is further to be remarked, that as Christianity has done so much for woman, she ought in return to do much for Christianity. Every thing that can render her life desirable she owes to Christ. Think for one moment, reader, of the hole of the pit from which Christ has taken you. Think of what would be your present condition, had it not been for the Christian religion. You might have been with the debased and wretched victims of pagan oppression,

cruelty, and lust; burning alive upon the funeral pile, or sacrificed by hands of violence and pollution, or cast out and neglected to pine in solitary and hopeless grief. Or, with the female followers of the false prophet, or in more refined but unchristian nations, you might have been little else than the slave or the convenience of man, and left to doubt whether any inheritance awaits you beyond the grave. From these depths of debasement and wretchedness Christianity has taken you and placed you on high, to move, and shine, and rejoice, in the sphere for which the Creator designed you. Not only has it made your condition as good as that of man, but in a moral view in some respects superior to it. How much then do you owe to Christ! To turn away from him with indifference or neglect, what ingratitude is this! How preposterous, how base, how unlovely, is female impiety. There was much sense in a remark made by an intelligent gentleman, who, although not pious himself, said, "I cannot look with any complacency upon a woman who does not manifest gratitude and love to Jesus Christ. Above all things, I hate to see so unnatural an object as an irreligious woman."

Such being the constitution and circumstances of woman, it is the manifest intention of God that she should be pre-eminent in moral excellence, and, through the influence of this, take a glorious lead in the renovation of the world. This she has to some extent ever done. Let all females of Christian

lands consider well their high calling, their solemn responsibility, and their glorious privilege. While many of their sex have proved recreant to their trust, and wasted life in vanity and in vice, others, an illustrious constellation, the holy and the good of ancient time, the mothers and the sisters in Israel, "the chief women not a few" of apostolic times, the bright throng that have since continued to come out from the world and tread in the steps of Jesus, and lead on their fellow-beings to the kingdom of purity and joy, have proved to us that as woman was first to fall so she is first to rise.

Yes, though it is not hers to amass wealth; to aspire to secular office and power; to shine in camps and armies; to hurl the thunders of our navies, and gather laurels from the ocean; or to receive the vain incense offered to public and popular eloquence;—yet hers it is, to be robed with the beauty of Christ; to shine in the honors of goodness; to shed over the world the sweet and holy influences of peace, virtue and religion; to be adorned with those essential and imperishable beauties, those unearthly stars and diadems, whose lustre will survive, with ever increasing brightness, when all earthly glory will fade and be forgotten. Come then, reader; come to your high duty, your glorious privilege; come and be blessed forever!

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF WOMAN.

'That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

THE elevated and shining character of the female sex as here contemplated is recognised among the blessings of a prosperous state of religion. It is at once a means and a result of the most perfect and happy condition of society. Utility and ornament in the female character are here united. Our daughters are to be, not as in pagan and savage nations, the abject subjects of menial toil, drudgery, and sensuality; nor yet, as in luxurious and corrupt civilized communities, creatures of idleness, vanity, and pleasure; they are to sustain at once the relation of *substantial utility* and of the most *beautiful ornament*. They are to be *corner-stones*, and corner-stones *polished*, and polished after the *similitude of a palace*. The figure is highly expressive. Considering the kingdom of God, as manifested in a truly religious and elevated state of society, under the similitude of a palace, and Christ as the *chief* corner-stone, the daughters are to hold their place

among the lively corner-stones built upon him. They have a place with those on whom the support and strength of the building depend. But they are also to be *polished*, or, as it may be rendered, hewed, wrought, and finished with great care and beauty, as becomes the corner-stones of a palace.

That our daughters may sustain as important a part as our sons in perfecting human society and promoting or blessing the kingdom of God, the examples in the Scriptures fully prove. That they may embalm themselves in the happy recollections of thousands after them, send the sweet odor of their name and the excellence of their influence down through all succeeding ages, you have only to contemplate in proof the example of Sarah, who through her faith and piety became a source of unspeakable blessings to unborn nations; of Rebecca, the wife of Isaac; of Rachel, the daughter of Laban, wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph; of Hannah, the mother and spiritual guardian of Samuel; of Esther, the royal princess and the savior of her nation; of Ruth, whose steadfast piety secured, through her descendant David, the richest blessings to the world; of Elizabeth, "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," the honored mother and guardian angel of the great forerunner; of Mary, the "highly favored among women," whose soul did "magnify the Lord," and whose spirit did rejoice in God her Savior; of Lois and of Eunice, whose "unfeigned

faith" and holy instructions stand upon the sacred record as manifested in the character of one of the brightest apostles of Christianity; and of others, a long and brilliant roll, on sacred and profane record, whose wisdom, piety, fidelity, and eminent service, have placed their names high among the stars that never fade.

The ascent of a nation from the savage to the civilized state is in a great measure effected through the Christian influence of woman; it is through her influence perverted, in a great measure, that a descent is thence made into the gulf that yawns upon the opposite side. From the high state of civilization and refinement, a descent to ruin is usually commenced with the false education, the indolence, the luxurious habits, of the female sex. Now the object is, to arrest the female character, as it exists in the present state of society; to preserve what is right in it, and save it from depreciating; to do this by pointing out a way in which woman may continue to ascend higher and higher in excellence and usefulness, and by affording her sufficient motives to do it. Let us here leave those examples of female character which peculiar circumstances have rendered conspicuous, and proceed to notice the qualifications by which *all* our daughters may become what the sacred writer discribes. Nature and circumstances will of course modify the general rules and instructions. All are not to be trained in the same particular manner, nor to occupy the same

position in society. Yet all may be truly good, useful, honorable, blessed of God, in their respective spheres and callings; all may be, in some important sense, as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace. To this end,

1. Early and continual attention must be paid to their *health*. Their energy of character, their efficiency their intellectual activity, their disposition, the type of their piety, the health and peace and happiness of their families, all depend very much upon this. It is not among the least evils of luxurious and refined society, that such habits are indulged as tend to deteriorate the health of females. Instead of being the active, vigorous, efficient daughters and matrons of simpler times, of high-toned health, bounding spirits, long and useful life, and almost fadeless beauty, they degenerate to a feeble, inactive, sickly, short-lived race. The consequences to the domestic state, to their children, and to the morals, piety and happiness of society, are disastrous in a high degree. I cannot here enlarge upon them. It is enough to say, that all those habits which are prejudicial to health must be from infancy resolutely shunned by those, who would aspire to the honor which our subject contemplates.

Whatever of irregularity in the disposition of time, late retiring and late rising; whatever of evil to the body in the modes and refinements of dress; whatever of enervating and wasting indolence; whatever of frequent and exciting entertainments,

which exhaust the nervous system and are followed by ennui and mental vacuity; whatever indulgences of the table, which feed a morbid and destructive appetite; in a word, whatever tends not to the highest and most prolonged health and vigor of both body and soul, must be resolutely and forever shunned by her who would become the highest ornament and the true glory of her sex.

Much is said of the evils to health resulting from modern modes of dress—perhaps too much; although the testimony of such scientific and valuable authority as the medical profession, is certainly deserving of very serious attention. Some have probably carried their opinions on this subject beyond due bounds; such is the known and pardonable tendency of minds strongly enlisted on a particular subject. But let no one despise or neglect the testimony of sober facts; and there are enough of them to prove, that there is more of truth than fancy in the doctrines upon this subject now currently maintained by physicians. The proprieties of taste and refinement need not be, and certainly should not be, sacrificed in the matter of dress, any more than in any thing else; and, without descending to further particulars, which would better become a secular lecture than this place and occasion, it may suffice to say, that such a style of dress as preserves the symmetry and integrity of the human system, and protects it thoroughly from our rugged climate and ever changing weather, is essential to the sound-

est health; and that whoever barters this to please vanity or custom, makes a dear and most unchristian bargain.

There are more evils to health however, in my opinion, resulting from the exposures and intemperate excitements of frequent and late assemblies of gaiety and pleasure; from indulgence in eating and drinking; particularly from the use of confectionary, of highly seasoned dishes and of stimulating drinks, and the habitual use of coffee and strong tea. All of these things tend strongly to irritate the nervous system and to impair the constitution.

But most of all, a want of vigorous, habitual, appropriate *exercise*, is impairing the energy and undermining the health of multitudes; it is sending to an early grave its annual hecatombs of female victims. The law of exercise has never been repealed; it is still equally binding on both sexes. The human system *must* have exercise, or it must languish. But modern abbreviations of female labor, in the inventions and so called improvements of the mechanic arts, together with the notions of delicacy and refinement which obtain in cultivated society, have exonerated a large portion of females from the necessity of manual labor. But if they are not under necessity to exercise to secure the objects of *labor*, let them still consider that they *are* under the same necessity as ever to exercise to secure the object of *health*.

In all suitable ways, and by all available means,

let them, as one of their first and most important objects, secure and preserve sound and vigorous health.

2. The next qualification is a habit of *industry*. This is essential to every productive virtue; it should be early formed and vigorously maintained. The temptations with young women in the present state of society to neglect it are numerous, and too often fatal. How many of our daughters, because their parents are able to support them, or because the mothers or servants assume the burden of domestic care, or because they are looking for some connection which will exempt them from the necessity of personal effort, form habits of fixed and hopeless indolence!

This evil is by no means confined to any one class. It is the pride of the rich, it is the ambition of the poor, to appear above the necessity of effort. But it is a false and pernicious sentiment. We were made for action; we are never in true honor but when actively engaged to the extent of our ability in accomplishing some good; and this is as true of woman as of man. Because it devolves on the man mainly to provide support for his family, does it therefore follow that wives and daughters have nothing or little to do? By no means. There still remains a most important service for them, and they are still as sacredly bound to make the most they possibly can of all their time and strength, in some useful employment, as if they were compelled

to do it for their daily bread. To be diligently and usefully employed to the extent of her ability is one of the first lessons to be inculcated upon the little miss, and to be continually impressed upon her through all the subsequent periods of her childhood, youth, and womanhood. Considering the great proneness to indolence in all human beings, and the fact that fashion and respectability so much sanction it in certain classes of females, it may be regarded as one of the most besetting and dangerous vices of our young women at the present time. There is with multitudes of them an enormous waste of energy, physical, intellectual, and moral; the sin of burying the talent is with them a crying sin.

But the *blame* is not wholly theirs. The vices entertained by many of the other sex, and false notions of refinement encouraged by society at large, have contributed to make our daughters suppose that it is essential to the character and standing of a lady to be as indolent and useless as possible. The least that she can know experimentally of the manner in which even her own daily food is prepared, or her own clothes made; or of the more severe and useful labors of the *mind*, whether in acquiring or imparting knowledge; or of the wants and reliefs of the poor and needy;—and the more she spends her mornings in bed, her evenings at novels or amusements, her mid-day hours in sauntering and lounging about, or exposing her person in the streets,—the more of an accomplished lady is

she! What notion can be more false and pernicious? Yet I need not tell you it is popular, common, extending to all classes and conditions of society. Many of all classes are aiming to bring up their daughters in this way. So countenanced is it, that the daughters of the poorest as well as of the richest often blush to have it said or supposed, that they have been engaged in some useful employment. I repeat it, the fault is not so much in the young women as in those who have the charge of bringing them up, and in public sentiment. For a young *man* to be usefully engaged, is *necessary* to his good standing in society; but for a young *woman* to be thus engaged, is not only not *necessary*, but rather *prejudicial* to her character as a refined and accomplished lady!

This public sentiment falling in with the natural disposition to idleness, is it strange that the result is a wide-spread and most melancholy paralysis of female energy? I speak within due and considerate limits when I assert, that in a large class of females not one-tenth part of useful results are accomplished by their existence, which might be accomplished. Their lives, compared with what they might be, are almost a barren waste, a dead blank on the scale of being. Instead of being any thing that resembles corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace, their history is rather that of hothouse plants. They spring into being, vegetate, and are gazed at, perhaps admired, for a little season; they then fade and vanish away forever!

The evils of this indolence in females extend to every thing with which they have to do. A grasshopper becomes to them a burden. To accomplish even a little thing costs them a prodigious and most exhausting effort. They cannot endure to *study*;—hence they must have teachers that will save them from the necessity of it, and yet by superficial means flatter them and their parents with a fine show of learning. They cannot endure to *think*;—hence they must have books of the most light and popular character, addressed principally to their imaginations and feelings. They cannot endure any domestic labor;—hence they must remain in ignorance of the things to be done in their own households, and thus subject themselves and their families to those numerous troubles from servants, which result from the ignorance and inefficiency of the mistress; to say nothing of the sacrifice of property in domestic wastes, for the want of some one to look well to the ways of her household. They cannot endure to walk;—hence they must be provided with a coach, not only when it is really necessary, but when they might as well walk, and when walking would comport much better with their means. They have not sufficient energy to sympathize with the cares, the duties, and trials of their husbands;—hence their husbands must bear their burdens alone, uncared for and unaided; and sometimes even experience the influence of their wives as a dead weight

upon them, to bring down their tottering resolution to the dust. They cannot endure to look after the education of their children;—hence their little ones must be committed entirely to others to toil for them alone, (thankless task!) or their young minds must be permitted to shoot up at random. They have not sufficient knowledge to select the best teachers;—hence their children must take their chance. They have not sufficient resolution to *govern* their children;—hence they must, so far as the mother is concerned, go ungoverned, and perhaps, as a consequence, be ruined. And, finally, they sometimes become so irresolute that they cannot, without a ghostly effort, even return their neighbor's friendly call; and the consequence perhaps is green-eyed jealousy and a breach of friendship. All is full of evil, trouble, disaster, resulting from their indolence and inefficiency. Their suns rise and set; weeks, months, and years run on; they bring almost nothing to pass, and yet they complain of having so much to do! They are laboriously employed in doing nothing. Their health becomes feeble; their spirits droop; they become nervous, peevish, unhappy;—instead of shedding light and joy over the domestic circle, they render it unhappy. Yes, the beautiful and admired daughter, or the engaging wife and mother, as she appears in the excitements of the drawing-room or the assembly, too often retires to the domestic circle, where most of all she should make her excellence to be seen and felt, there to exhibit the

bitter fruits of selfish indolence in the everlasting sighs and complaints of peevish discontent!

As then you would secure the well-being of your daughters, and of all with whom they may have to do, be sure to train them to industry. Never allow them to think that their hands are too good to perform any useful work, or that any task is too laborious for their perseverance to accomplish, or any study or art too hard for their minds and their industry to master. Let them early learn and ever remember the motto, "*Labor pertinax omnia vincit;*" and let the great motives and encouragements to industry be kept constantly before them. With carefulness never to overtax their powers, let the hours of every day be sacredly appropriated; let not a single hour be lost. Let them rise early and enter directly upon the assigned duties of the day, and pass with the most exact economy of time through the successive hours for domestic duties, study, giving or receiving necessary calls, exercise, miscellaneous reading, devotions, &c. Let them learn to do all with the utmost fidelity, diligence, and despatch; and always, before retiring, let them call themselves to strict account for the manner in which they have spent the day.

For all this industry they will find sufficient occasion, in securing a thorough knowledge of the various domestic duties, and in discharging those duties; in disciplining their minds and storing them with knowledge; in cultivating their moral powers

and affections; in training and educating their children; in administering relief to the needy and sympathy to the afflicted; in promoting religion by their assistance in Sabbath schools, by their intelligent Christian conversation, by their prayers and their cheering sympathy; in a word, in securing and sustaining the elevated character and influence requisite to their successful promotion of the noblest and most valuable interests of our existence. Without this, therefore, they fail to rise to the proper dignity and glory of their sex.

Mothers! in the name of religion and humanity, I charge you, teach your daughters *industry*. No matter how much of wealth and beauty and refined accomplishments they have; without *this* virtue, they are unfit to be either wives, or mothers, or members of society,—without this, their husbands, their children, the society of which they are to be members, will suffer a greater loss in respect to them than can be atoned for—greater than my pen shall attempt to describe.

3. The next qualification is a *well-cultivated intellect*. I do not think that the uses of female education, and the vast motives to it, have ever been sufficiently considered. When the sphere of woman's duties and the important uses for her intellectual culture are well understood, it will be seen to be in many respects more important that she should have a sound and thorough education, than that the other sex should. If man is more engaged

in transacting business, securing the necessities of life, protecting rights and justice, woman is to be more engaged in the higher life and cultivation of the soul. If the brothers must spend most of their time in the field or the shop, the sisters are to preserve the intellectual atmosphere of the house. If the husband must look after his property and provide his children with bread, the wife must look after the *minds* of her children and provide them with knowledge. If the husband must do most for their physical, the wife must do most for their intellectual, natures—inspire them with noble sentiments, with lofty ambition, and implant the elements of greatness in their opening minds. She must be a fountain of knowledge to her family; but how can she do this, unless her own mind is elevated and enlarged with knowledge? The streams cannot rise above their fountain.

She is moreover to be a permanent *companion* to her *husband*, his richest and most intimate source of interest and joy through life;—how important then that she should have those mental resources by which she may retain her hold upon his respect, confidence, interest, and affection, after the novelty and romance of other charms have passed away, (as they very soon do) and nothing but the severer and more abiding excellencies of the mind remain to interest.

If we except those men professionally devoted to teaching, the intellectual character of a community

depends more upon its women than its men. It is the tone of conversation that obtains in society which elevates or depresses the intellectual standard; and of this females generally take the lead. They mingle so constantly and extensively in society, their presence and conversation are so much desired, they converse so easily, and what they say is listened to with such chivalrous deference, that whenever, without affectation or pedantry, out of the simplicity and abundance of their minds, they are enabled to converse and do converse with intelligence upon subjects of an elevated and valuable character—when their words breathe with inspiring thought—when they open the rich fountains of the mind—when naturally and unconsciously they discover the dignity and beauty of sound knowledge and wisdom, tempered and enriched with whatever is lovely and engaging in the female disposition,—the influence which they put forth to elevate the prevailing standard of mind is almost omnipotent.

But when they can converse and do converse upon nothing but their furniture, their dress, the latest fashion, the last party or dance, the last engagement, the last marriage, or, at the most, the last novel, they tend to make all persons about them as frivolous as themselves. The men who come in from the cares of business to enjoy their society, having themselves had but little time for intellectual improvement, and looking to the more favored sex for entertainment, hearing from them nothing but

this airy and trifling stuff, naturally let themselves down to this species of entertainment, and conclude to make the best of it. After a few efforts they contrive to fill their own mouths with the same kind of empty talk, and are always sure to begin to employ it the moment they come into the society of ladies: insomuch that at length the prevailing taste is so depraved and reduced, that the woman who asserts the proper dignity of her sex, and ventures to converse as becomes her, encounters no small hazard of being denounced as a pedant.

That there is sometimes actual pedantry among partially educated women, as well as men, and that it is always offensive, I shall not deny; but that the intellectual tone of society should be such as to render so much vain and frivolous conversation contemptible, and to make it honorable and even needful to one who would sustain the character of a lady, to sustain that style of conversation which I have commended, I am confident to affirm. Nay, more; I am very sure that even in the present state of society, after all that is said against female pedantry, the woman who exhibits in her conversation the fruits of a well-cultivated intellect, commands the secret admiration of every intelligent man who knows her, and exerts an influence upon him to incite him to mental cultivation, more than he would realize from ten men of the same acquirements. So much farther does cultivated intellect in a woman go than in a man, in its influence to ele-

vate the mental character of society. It is owing to the respect, the admiration, the love, the chivalrous deference, in which refined and well-educated females are held by the other sex, and in a truly Christian community ever will be held.

To make my meaning plain, can you suppose that the intellectual acquirements of Miss Martineau would ever have exerted the influence they have, had she been a man. Now if her attainments, by no means extraordinary, not equal to what thousands of men in both continents have made, and attended with so much pedantry and so much else that is offensive to true taste and propriety, procured for her so much attention, respect, and homage from men both in Europe and America, what might be expected from that cultivation of the female intellect which I am advocating, associated with the character which all love to contemplate? In the presence of a refined and accomplished lady, whose conversation, flowing out with artless simplicity, develops the treasures of a rich, thinking, cultivated, sparkling intellect, we feel ourselves to be almost in the presence of an angel of light; and nothing can surpass the inspiration which we thence feel to aspire after mental excellence.

This may be said to be owing to the fewness of examples of eminent intellectual cultivation among women; yet if this be in part allowed, it still cannot be doubted that if there were among them as many examples of as high intellectual cultivation as there

are among men, the influence resulting therefrom to elevate society would be vastly greater than that resulting now from the intellectual cultivation of the other sex.

But we must not dwell longer upon the importance of female education. A word or two we must say upon the *kind* of education desired, and the feasibility and manner of obtaining it. It is not that popular, hasty, superficial style of education, so unhappily current, which at all meets the object now contemplated. This is frequently almost worse than none, inasmuch as it feeds vanity without enriching or strengthening the mind. It is that education which, commencing with the youthful intellect, and conducting it thoroughly on through the successive stages of discipline in the elementary and thence to the higher studies, teaches it to fix its attention, to think, to investigate, to reason, to generalize, and if possible to originate; which furnishes the mind with first principles and a knowledge of the class of facts comprehended under them; which renders the mind patient, persevering, strong, and far-reaching; which stores the imagination with the choicest imagery; which creates such a mental taste for what is truly rich and intellectual as to render insipid the light, frothy, dissipating productions of frivolous minds, so unhappily prevalent and so ruinous to the mental character of this age; which begets a strong and healthful relish for whatever is rich in thought, sound in argument, chaste in imagery, classical in style,

original in conception, sparkling in wit, powerful in evidence, lucid in truth, and important in principle; which causes one to come, as to an intellectual banquet, to the productions of the greatest and noblest intellects of all ages, and to feel a delightful sympathy in them. A mind thus educated need not resort to the dreamy, feverish, nervous excitements of theatres, novels, and idle tales, nor yet to the dissipating amusements of the assembly or the ball-room, to gratify her vanity, in order to find pleasure;—it would be like turning aside from pure, gushing fountains from the rock, to a puddle of filthy water, to assuage thirst. No: the excellent men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the truly great and noble minds of every age that still live and speak, together with her own disciplined and well-stored mind, are to her an everlasting source of the most elevated and abundant of all earthly enjoyment; while she is herself also to her family and to the society in which she moves, in her intellectual influence upon them, as the sun when he walketh in brightness.

Nor let this be deemed chimerical. It can be done. It has been done in a good measure in some instances; it may be done to a very great extent in all. The treasures of the female intellect have scarcely begun to be developed. For nearly six thousand years a deep slumber has rested upon the minds of the better part of creation. I believe that Providence has a benevolent design in abridging the

toil of female hands, and that too beyond what can ever be expected in regard to the more appropriate labors of men. The labors of the farm, of merchandise, of navigation, of the professions, and of many of the mechanic arts, cannot be much reduced; while the operations of the cards, the wheels, the looms, the needles, &c., which occupied three fourths of the time of our mothers, are now taken entirely out of the hands of most of our daughters, leaving them no more manual labor to perform than is important to their health, and compatible with the highest intellectual cultivation. With due attention to health, and with those habits of diligence of which I have spoken, our daughters may faithfully learn and practise all the duties of manual labor which devolve upon them, and yet have sufficient time to secure the most thorough and finished education. Let it be early understood by them that the promises of beauty and of external accomplishments, the attractions of wealth, and a favorable marriage, are among the things above which their thoughts and aims must rise. If these are allowed to hold some subordinate place of consideration, they are not at least *the* things on which a mind that would be truly eminent and excellent, must place its dependence. The young woman who places her dependence upon these, may lay her account with an inglorious and probably a wretched life.

Let her then be placed in due season under a course of intellectual discipline. Let eight or ten

of the twenty-four hours be appropriated to sleep; six or eight to meals, devotions, recreations, and manual labor; and the remaining eight to study. Let the mother hold a vigilant eye upon her, to inspire and secure the faithful performance of every duty in its time and place, and let her always co-operate with the teacher in her education. Let no possible sacrifice be thought dear, to secure the most competent and thorough teachers; let her be gradually handed along up through the successive stages of mental discipline and of knowledge, never advancing to the next till the preceding is perfectly mastered, always resolved to conquer and always aiming at the solid growth of mind; and not many years will pass before she will have acquired such taste and habits, as that she will move onward and upward by her own impetus. She will need no urging;—she will only need guiding and restraining. By the time she has reached the period of womanhood, she will have accomplished more domestic service than is now accomplished by nine tenths of our daughters in the same time; and she will have acquired an education equal to that obtained by most of our young men who graduate, and far better than that obtained by many of them. That she will have better preserved her health, secured more enjoyment, and laid the foundation for more in years to come, than is done in the mean time by the daughters of idleness, dissipation, and gaiety, it is scarcely needful to add. That she will have been

a source of less expense to her father is also more than probable. That she will have secured a most important qualification towards becoming a rich treasure to her husband, a blessing to her children, an ornament to her sex, and a corner-stone in the temple of God, polished after the similitude of a palace, who is prepared to doubt?

Because this has been so seldom done, let none say it cannot be extensively done. And because female education has been so little *applied* to useful ends, let none conclude that it is therefore of necessity useless. I am sure that I do not dream. Having been for several years engaged to some extent in teaching, and having had the charge of the education of females, as well as males, in every stage of progress from the lowest to the highest branches, I have uniformly found that their intellects were as active, vigorous, comprehensive, quick to learn and slow to forget; as competent to grasp and master the highest studies of mathematics and philosophy; to acquire the knowledge of logic, rhetoric, and composition; or to surmount the difficulties of the dead languages, as those of the other sex: and often even *more* so; owing, probably, to more diligent application. I have had female pupils who, by a course of vigorous discipline, have in less than one year acquired such an impulse for knowledge, that it was rather needful to *restrain* than to *urge* them, and only the delightful task of *directing* their upward movement remained for the teacher. Ob-

servation and experience have convinced us, also, that to all those noble and important *uses* which I have specified, female education may be successfully applied; and that it *must* be applied to them, before Christianity can obtain its highest end, or society reach its most perfect state, or woman shine in her truest and brightest lustre.

4. The fourth and last qualification to be mentioned is *religion.* I mention this last, not because it is least, but because it is greatest, and is the crown and glory of all the rest. It is that without which all the other qualifications of woman will only give her greater power to do evil while she lives, and sink her deeper in perdition when she dies. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Indeed all her other qualifications should be sought from the impulse of religious motives. She should be taught to consider it a *religious duty* to take the best possible care of her *health*, that she may the better and the longer promote the object of her existence and that of her fellow-beings. She should be taught the duty of *industry*, that she may make the most that she possibly can of all her time and opportunities, to render herself and mankind as excellent and as blessed as possible. She should be taught to cultivate her *intellect*, because that intellect is to exist forever, and its cultivation here is to affect its condition hereafter; because it is the grand instrument for diffusing truth and knowledge and moral influ-

ence; and because the human mind is the noblest work of God upon earth, and has the impress of the divine image, so that to waste it is to sacrifice that whose value is above rubies.

First of all, then, she should be taught her relation to God and to his kingdom. She should take the law of God for her rule of action, and submit herself implicitly to his will. She should give her soul to Christ, trusting in his grace alone for salvation, realizing that she has been bought with the price of his blood. With grateful, confiding, and rejoicing heart, she should devote all her powers to him and to his service forever. She should commune much with God in daily prayer, seeking above all things the enlightening and renewing influences of his Holy Spirit. Often should she bedew the Savior's cross and sepulchre with tears of gratitude, penitence, and joy. She should ascend the mount of transfiguration, breathe the atmosphere of heaven, gaze upon the immaculate glories of Christ, till she is prepared to come down into society with her countenance irradiated and her eye kindling with the joys of that better world.

She should educate her *conscience* with the utmost tenderness and care. She should aim ever to keep it void of offence towards God and man, sprinkled from dead works, so as faithfully to chide all delinquency and commend all duty; she should attend to it as the voice of the Divinity, ever speaking, and speaking to be heard, in her bosom. She should

ever prize a good conscience above all the pleasures of sense and all the fond flatteries of the world. With the utmost fidelity she should discipline her *will* to cordial and sweet subjection to the will of God, and to all the dealings of his providence; her *affections* to keen and lively delight in God, and in all his requirements; so that she can say from day to day, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee."

With Christian views and motives she should also with studious care cultivate her social disposition, always aiming to render it benevolent, self-forgetting, amiable, sweet, engaging, so that she may be attractive to all who know her, and so that all may see in her the pure and blessed image of her Savior.

Thus, while many of her companions are wasting their health in pleasures and excesses, wasting their time in indolence and vanity, wasting their intellects in frivolous reading and amusements, wasting their moral energies in sin, and by this course preparing themselves to be mere units or ciphers in existence, and to receive the condemnation of their Judge at last, *she* is preparing for the glorious destination and rewards of the righteous and the faithful. As her days pass happily on, every hour of which being diligently and delightfully employed in securing the object of her existence; as her habits of industry and consequent power of effect grow and become confirmed; as her mind rises and expands with knowledge and vigor; as her moral powers become

sanctified and shine in the beauty of holiness; as the worth of her character and the influence of her example begin to be seen and felt by all around her; it is manifest that she is in a sure course of preparation to be set as a corner-stone, polished after the similitude of a palace, in that temple of God not built with hands, eternal in the heavens. And when all the daughters of indolence, vanity, pleasure, and sin, shall have faded like the leaf and perished from remembrance; when the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eye and the pride of life, and all the possessions, flatteries, and follies of the world shall be buried in an awful and eternal grave; then shall *she* appear in the likeness of her Savior, the admiration and joy of angels, at once a subject and a source of unutterable glory and blessing in the everlasting kingdom of God.

WOMAN,

IN HER

SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC CHARACTER.

BY

MRS. JOHN SANDFORD.

SIXTH AMERICAN EDITION.

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TO THE

SECOND LONDON EDITION

In obeying the call which has been made upon her for a second edition of her little book, the authoress is anxious to express her acknowledgments for the encouragement she has already received.

The kind suggestions conveyed to her from some of her friends, and through the pages of several esteemed periodicals, have enabled her to make such alterations as will, she hopes, render the present edition more worthy than its predecessor of the indulgence of the public.

Besides a general revisal of the whole, she has introduced into her work two new chapters, which will, in some measure, supply its previous deficiencies. It need hardly be added, that the authoress is quite sensible that her performance must still be regarded merely as an outline.

Chillingham.

ON WOMAN,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

CAUSES OF FEMALE INFLUENCE.

The changes wrought by Time are many. It influences the opinions of men as familiarity does their feelings; it has a tendency to do away with superstition, and to reduce every thing to its real worth.

It is thus that the sentiment for woman has undergone a change. The romantic passion which once almost deified her is on the decline; and it is by intrinsic qualities that she must now inspire respect. She is no longer the queen of song and the star of chivalry. But if there is less of enthusiasm entertained for her, the sentiment is more rational, and, perhaps, equally sincere; for it is in relation to happiness that she is chiefly appreciated.

And in this respect it is, we must confess, that she is most useful and most important. Domestic life is the chief source of her influence; and the greatest debt society can owe to her is domestic comfort: for

nothing conduces more to these results than congeniality. Perhaps conjugal virtue was never more aptly panegyrized than in the following eulogy on a matron of the last century:—"She was a lady of such symmetrical proportion to her husband, that they seemed to come together by a sort of natural magnetism."

Domestic life is a woman's sphere, and it is there that she is most usefully as well as most appropriately employed. But society, too, feels her influence, and receives from her, in great measure, its balance and its tone. She may be here a corrective of what is wrong, a moderator of what is unruly, a restraint on what is indecorous. Her presence may be a pledge against impropriety and excess, a check on vice, and a protection to virtue.

And it is her delicacy which will secure to her such an influence, and enable her to maintain it. The policy of licentiousness is to undermine where it cannot openly attack, and to weaken by stratagem what it may not rudely assail. But a delicate woman will be as much upon her guard against the insidious as against the direct assault, and will no more tolerate the innuendo than the avowal. She will shrink from the licentiousness which is couched in ambiguous phrase or veiled in covert allusion, and from the immorality which, though it may not offend the ear, is meant to corrupt the heart. And though a depraved taste may relish the condiments of vice, or an unscrupulous palate receive them without de-

tection, her virtue will be too sensitive not to reject the poison, and to recoil from it spontaneously.

Delicacy is, indeed, the point of honor in woman. Her purity of manner will ensure to her deference, and repress, more effectually than any other influence, impropriety of every kind. A delicate woman, too, will be more loved, as well as more respected, than any other; for affection can scarcely be excited, and certainly cannot long subsist, unless it is founded on esteem.

Yet such delicacy is neither prudish nor insipid. Conversation, for instance, is one great source of a woman's influence; and it is her province, and her peculiar talent, to give zest to it. She is, and ought to be, the enlivener of society. If she restrains impropriety, she may promote cheerfulness; and it is not because her conversation is innocent that it need therefore be dull. The sentiment of woman contributes much to social interest; her feeling imparts life, and her gentleness a polish.

It is not, however, by effort that she will succeed, or by mere volubility that she will render herself agreeable. Some women seem to think time lost when they are not talking; and whether it be mere worldly tittle-tattle or insipid sentimentalism in which they indulge, they are equally impatient of listening and equally anxious to engross. But soliloquizing is not conversation. In woman, too, an attempt at display is always disagreeable, and even brilliancy will not atone for it.

The charm of conversation is feeling; forgetting one's self, and sympathizing with others. It is not to shine, but to please, that a woman should desire; and she will do so only when she is graceful and unaffected, when her wish is not so much to be admired as to contribute to the gratification of others.

And, for this purpose, she must bring into society heart and mind. The one will teach her how to feel for those around her, the other how to adapt herself to them; and both will greatly contribute to her agreeableness. The insipidity of some women is attributable more to want of interest than of capacity. It is not because they have nothing to say that they say nothing, nor because they are deficient that they are trifling. They sometimes do not trouble themselves to be agreeable. They think that if they look pretty, and are inoffensive, they fulfil their part; and they glide through life like tame animals, and are almost as indolent and as selfish. It is well if, when they cease to be ornamental, they do not become as troublesome.

A woman should always do her utmost to please; and an expression of interest is often sufficient. To be a good listener, and to reply with ease, good sense, and good breeding, are the most requisite qualities for an agreeable companion; but the sealed lips, the vacant stare, and the abrupt transition, are equally rude and disappointing.

Such indifference is inexcusable in those whose talent for conversation might be so easily improved.

English women are proverbially silent; yet there is no reason why they should be so, nor why, because they are exemplary at home, they should be insipid in society. It is their boast that their education is superior; it is, then, the more to their discredit, when it fails in what is surely an important result. And if men are too apt to retire to themselves, if *they* talk of politics and the chase, whilst dress and tittle-tattle are discussed upon the sofa, may not their exclusiveness be, in great measure, attributable to the bad grace with which they are too frequently received? Might not the stillness of the one, and the insipidity of the other circle, be often much relieved by a little more sympathy between them?

Again, to be agreeable, a woman must avoid egotism. No matter how superior she may be, she will never be liked if she talks chiefly of herself. The impression of her own importance can convey no pleasure to others; on the contrary, as a desire for distinction is generally mutual, a sense of inferiority must be depressing.

If we would converse pleasingly, we must endeavor to set others at ease; and it is not by flattery that we can succeed in doing so, but by a courteous and kind address, which delicately avoids all needless irritation, and endeavors to infuse that good humor of which it is itself the result.

In women this is a Christian duty. How often should they suppress their own claims rather than interfere with those of others. How studiously

should they employ their talent in developing that of their associates, and not for its own display. How invariably should they discard pretension, and shun even the appearance of conceit; seeking to imbibe the spirit of that lovely religion, of which sympathy is the characteristic feature, and humility the pre-eminent grace.

It is in this way that accomplishment contributes to the agreeableness of woman. The encouragement and cultivation of the arts seems, indeed, appropriate to her. Yet, perhaps, there is nothing in which she oftener errs. In this, as in other things, affectation spoils all. There is a theatrical manner about some women, which, to say the least of it, is an outrage upon taste. The gestures of the stage can never be appropriate in a private circle, nor are they becoming a modest female. She may copy the skill, but surely nothing else that marks the professional performer.

But affectation is not the only mistake into which women may fall in reference to accomplishment. Some of them seem to imagine that a proficiency in the fine arts compensates for the want of all other attraction; and as this is their only charm, they are restless until it is displayed, and dissatisfied unless it excites admiration. Their happiness, or, at least, their affability, seems to depend on the success of their bravura, or the admiration excited by their tinting. Yet a mere display of skill contributes little to the agreeableness of society. However fond we may be of music or drawing, we should scarcely select a

companion from her proficiency in playing a concerto, or her skill in laying on colors.

Women who are eager to exhibit are often careless of pleasing in a domestic circle; their talent must be kept as a gem for special occasions, and when these are wanting it is almost as useless. It is to attract notice; and when the great end of notice is attained, it may be laid aside. It is to captivate; and when the prize is secured, the fascination ceases.

But it is not to add another toil to the meshes of intrigue, or to furnish coquetry with another means of allurement, that the talent of women is to be cultivated. Accomplishment is, indeed, a graceful and appropriate ornament; but it should be worn with ease, and should be rather the indication of an elegant mind than an extrinsic decoration. It should render a woman more agreeable both at home and in society, and should furnish her with one of those innocent and graceful refreshments which vary and relieve graver occupation.

It is seldom, indeed, that women are great proficients. The *chefs-d'œuvre* of the sculptress need the polish of the master chisel; and the female pencil has never yet limned the immortal forms of beauty. The mind of woman is, perhaps, incapable of the originality and strength requisite for the sublime. Even Saint Cecilia exists only in an elegant legend; and the poetry of music, if often felt and expressed, has seldom been conceived by a female adept. But the practical talents of women are far

from contemptible; and they may be both the encouragers and the imitators of genius. They should not grasp at too much, or be content with superficial attainment; they should not merely daub a few flowers, or hammer out a few tunes, or trifle away their time in inept efforts, which at best claim only indulgence; but they should do well what they do attempt, and do it without affectation or display.

CHAPTER II.

CAUSES OF FEMALE INFLUENCE.

Nothing is so likely to conciliate the affections of the other sex as a feeling that woman looks to them for support and guidance. In proportion as men are themselves superior, they are accessible to this appeal. On the contrary, they never feel interested in one who seems disposed rather to offer than to ask assistance. There is, indeed, something unfeminine in independence. It is contrary to nature, and therefore it offends. We do not like to see a woman affecting tremors, but still less do we like to see her acting the amazon. A really sensible woman feels her dependence. She does what she can; but she is conscious of inferiority, and therefore grateful for support. She knows that she is the weaker vessel, and that as such she should receive honor. In this view, her weakness is an attraction, not a blemish.

In every thing, therefore, that women attempt, they should show their consciousness of dependence. If they are learners, let them evince a teachable spirit; if they give an opinion, let them do it in an unassuming manner. There is something so unpleasant in female self-sufficiency that it not unfrequently deters instead of persuading, and prevents

the adoption of advice which the judgment even approves. Yet this is a fault into which women of certain pretensions are occasionally betrayed. Age, or experience, or superior endowment, entitles them, they imagine, to assume a higher place, and a more independent tone. But their sex should ever teach them to be subordinate; and they should remember that influence is obtained not by assumption, but by a delicate appeal to affection or principle. Women, in this respect, are something like children; the more they show their need of support, the more engaging they are.

The appropriate expression of dependence is gentleness. However endowed with superior talents a woman may be, without gentleness she cannot be agreeable. Gentleness ought to be the characteristic of the sex; and there is nothing that can compensate for the want of this feminine attraction.

Gentleness is, indeed, the talisman of woman. To interest the feelings is to her much easier than to convince the judgment; the heart is far more accessible to her influence than the head. She never gains so much as by concession, and is never so likely to overcome as when she seems to yield.

Gentleness prepossesses at first sight: it insinuates itself into the vantage ground, and gains the best position by surprise. Whilst a display of skill and strength calls forth a counter array, gentleness at once disarms opposition, and wins the day before it is contested.

The mind of woman should be cast in a gentle mould. We feel occasionally that how much soever we may respect some women, there is *that* about them which we can scarcely love. They want the softness and sweetness essential to female grace. Their conversation is not pleasing, because, though what they say may be very just, and even very instructive, it does not fall from honied lips. And though we esteem their character, we do not court their society, but are inclined to prefer knowing them at a distance to a more intimate acquaintance with them.

Nearly allied to gentleness is elegance. Elegance contributes much to female fascination; and women should seek to be elegant not only in manner, but in mind. Manner is, indeed, generally symptomatic; but as it may be artificial, it is no sure criterion of mental grace. It is the latter which is essential to true beauty. Without it, the fairest form disappoints and wearies. It is the radiance that sets off every other charm, and sheds on each its appropriate hue. It is tint and proportion. Yet it is more easily understood than defined, and better felt than expressed.

Of such elegance taste is the true source. As it teaches symmetry, so does it impart grace. Taste is the rule of elegance. There may be artificial forms, and these may or may not be agreeable to the proportions of taste; but taste gives the only true models, and every departure from them is an error.

Taste is susceptible of improvement; and elegance is the result of cultivated taste. As in art the rude handler of the chisel may in time become a proficient in sculpture, or the most simple designer a master of the easel; so may the taste which refines the mind and proportions the character be equally disciplined and improved.

It is a great mistake to suppose that fashion is a criterion of elegance. Modes of fashion are entirely conventional, and are often as ungraceful as they are capricious. The lady, for instance, who anoints her head with tallow is irresistible in Ethiopia; and though we cannot sympathize with her admirers, we have no right to question their taste. Our own has been, at times, little better. We may smile at the strictures of the Spectator on the patches of his day; but the coiffure of this century has vied with the cushion of the last, and the dimensions of our own petticoats have sometimes seemed to threaten the reinstatement of the hoop.

But it is not in costume only that fashion is grotesque; in manner she is equally capricious. Elegance rests on immutable rules; but the versatility of *fashion* is proverbial. The euphuism of the Elizabethan court was but little more absurd than the mannerism which has often been as arbitrarily prescribed. Each may be in its turn a test of ton, or a passport to exclusive circles, or a mode as universal as the contour of a robe, and, from its sameness, as wearisome; but it has no intrinsic recommendation

and though it may obtain for a season, it must soon be cast off as an obsolete dress.

But good breeding is quite a different thing. It is the result of a refined taste; and though generally the mark of good company, it differs essentially from the prescriptions of fashion. It is without affectation and without constraint. It is unobtrusive and unpretending. It is always self-possessed and at ease; for it knows its own place and its own relations. Its courtesy is not officious, nor are its attentions ever troublesome. Yet this quiet and lady-like deportment, though it seems to imply no effort, is by no means an easy or a common attainment. On the contrary, we often see women who have lived much in society very deficient in this criterion of grace; and we can quite understand the remark of a really high-bred woman on a candidate for fashionable celebrity: "She is very pretty, and very pleasing, but she wants repose."

Elegance is nature, but not rude nature; it is unaffected, but not unpolished: it copies natural grace, and corrects natural defects. Yet it is no servile imitator, for it studies suitability as well as simplicity. It does not, for instance, imagine that what is very pretty and playful in a girl of fourteen is equally becoming at thirty. Neither does it play the romp, or act the groom, leap a five-barred gate, or affect the Di Vernon. Least of all does it indulge in that raillery which is piquante only because it is personal, and which amuses in proportion as it annoys. It

has a respect for the feelings, and a tenderness even for the faults, of others; and as it never wounds, so does it never invite aggression.

It implies feeling also; and here again does it differ from the polish of the world. Selfishness is the bane of fashionable life. Every one is cold, for every one is selfish. What court could be more polished than that of Marie Antoinette? Yet selfishness was the predominating principle, and in the hour of trial self-preservation the only aim. The *élite* of Paris paid, however, the greater compliment to sentiment, by assuming its language, whilst they were strangers to its real influence.

Nothing is more persuasive than feeling; it has a natural charm to which art can never attain; and therefore it is that we feel the connection between elegance and amiability. We must allow, indeed, the not unfrequent existence of the latter without the former; but we can scarcely conceive a really elegant woman altogether unamiable.

Elegance is poetry in action. Imagination may paint the heroine deficient in beauty, but never in elegance. It is this which diffuses, as it were, a halo round woman, which invests her with a romantic charm, and which more, perhaps, than any other attraction, renders her an object of interest.

Yet it is grace not affected, but natural; grace which tinges every thought, breathes in every expression, and regulates every movement—which

adorns the hearth as much as the drawing-room; and which is habitual, because it is innate.

And if such grace is not the property of the many, but of the few; if experience tells us that it exists oftener in the mind of the poet than in every-day life; above all, if there are many kind, and excellent, and most admirable women who by no means realize it; these are still no reasons why we should not set it before us, and try to imitate what is so truly attractive. There are none, perhaps, who, in early life, cannot attain to something like elegance; and though it be but an ornament, it is one so agreeable that it is well worth endeavoring to possess.

To be careless of elegance, indeed, proves little anxiety to please, or little acquaintance with the susceptibilities of the heart.

Man is very accessible to the graceful and the beautiful; and, however engrossed by higher pursuits, he seeks in the society of woman relaxation and relief. He wishes to find in her an enlivener and sweetener of his leisure, as well as the sharer of his cares; and a sensible woman will be desirous that her address should furnish a recommendation, rather than a contrast, to her moral or mental worth.

Religion, far from disparaging elegance, gives new motives for its cultivation. The religious woman should endeavor to increase her influence, that she may turn it to the best account; and, in this view, she will not consider what is ornamental as unworthy her regard. She will cultivate it as a means of per-

suasion; and will study to be agreeable, were it only from a desire to recommend her principles.

Christianity is itself full of grace. It is a refiner as well as a purifier of the heart. It imparts correctness of perception, delicacy of sentiment, and all those nicer shades of thought and feeling which constitute elegance of mind. Why, then, should piety and inelegance be associated? Or why should an absence of the graceful characterize religious persons so often, that awkwardness and even vulgarity are regarded by many as the usual concomitants of extraordinary seriousness?

Women of piety should not give occasion to such a reproach. They are not more devout because they are ungraceful, or more heavenly-minded because they are deficient in taste. On the contrary, they imbibe more deeply the spirit of their lovely religion when they carry its charm into the detail of life, when they are fascinating as well as faithful, and agreeable as well as good.

CHAPTER III.

THE VALUE OF LETTERS TO WOMAN.

OPINION is now more than it ever was in favor of the diffusion of knowledge; and it is only to be expected that woman should profit by this enlargement of feeling. Not that the *bas bleu* is not still unpopular; but as female acquirements have become more common, they attract less notice, and their utility and importance are better understood.

Still, however, there is no possession of which men are so tenacious as that of learning. Perhaps it is because knowledge is power that they are therefore not disposed to share it with woman; or perhaps it is because, instead of improving her acquirements to good purpose, she sometimes only uses them as a plea for assumption.

It is to be feared that their reluctance is to be ascribed principally to the latter cause; for it must be allowed that literary ladies have not been always very prepossessing. The disciple of Wollstoncraft threw off her hat and called for a boot-jack, and imagined that by affecting the manners of the other sex she should best assert her equality with them. The female pedant appears in a disordered dress and with inky fingers, and fancies that the further she is

removed from feminine grace the nearer she approaches to manly vigor. We cannot wonder that with such examples, men should prefer proficients in housewifery to smatterers in science; and that, they would rather see on their wife's table Mrs. Dalgairns on Domestic, than Mrs. Marcet on Political, Economy.

But then there is no reason why female acquirement should be identified with all this folly. On the contrary, it is the tendency of real knowledge to make a woman sensible, as well as humble; and it is on this very account so valuable to the sex.

To produce, however, this good effect, acquirement must not be superficial. It is not occasionally reading a review, or skimming a periodical, that will improve the mind, or afford us solid satisfaction. A very little knowledge gathered in this way enables a woman, indeed, to shine in conversation, and gives her the credit of being very intellectual; but she is at the same time conscious of the weakness of her pretension, and is not unlikely to endeavor to compensate by mere fluency for what she feels to be her deficiency in depth.

Women are by no means wanting in ready talent. Their perception is very quick, and they are dexterous in applying the knowledge they possess. Thus they sometimes seem to make a rapid progress, and even to outstrip minds of greater vigor. But, on this account, intellectual discipline is, in their case, the more essential; that it may teach them

how really to improve their faculty of acquirement; and that it may check an exuberance which is generally disappointing because it is precocious.

It is to superficial attainment that we may trace most of the mistakes which persons fall into with respect to literature. We are never so likely to be vain as when we estimate our proficiency solely by the number of our acquirements. And this is not unfrequently the case with women. They know a little Latin, a little Italian, a little German, perhaps a little Hebrew, or a little Greek; and they immediately imagine themselves scholars. And they are not unfrequently encouraged in this belief by the flattery of their friends; for to construe a page in a classic author, to read a German play, or to quote a stanza of an Italian poet, is quite sufficient to establish their claim to superior talent. Can we wonder, then, that they should be a little prone to vanity, when so much is thought of very trifling attainments; or that they should be somewhat ambitious of literary fame, when it may be so easily obtained?

It was different with the ladies of an earlier century,—with the Moricæ, and others, of whom the writers of that day make honorable mention. The daughters of More, the associate of Edward, and the pupil of Roger Ascham, enjoyed, indeed, no common advantages. But what would the female *bel esprit* of the nineteenth century think of maintaining a Latin correspondence with the first scholar of the age? Or what would our modern blue-stockings

make of a dialogue of Plato, or a play of Sophocles; Or, to refer to a later period, how would our lady philosophers solve a problem in the "Ladies' Diary?"

Literature, indeed, was a rare accomplishment amongst women of former days; but when they did attempt it they were satisfied with no ordinary proficiency. It is a pity that their industry and good sense are not oftener imitated; for, though we may not wish all women to be, like them, Grecians or mathematicians, we cannot question the superiority of intellectual pursuits to many of the usual ways of getting rid of time. Why should not the leisure of women be employed in storing and strengthening their minds? Why, if they are spared the fatigues of active life, should they be debarred from the pleasures of literature? The lives of too many of them are spent almost in idleness; and their alleged inaptitude for intellectual pursuits furnishes a plea for listlessness and trifling. They fancy themselves not called to mental exertion, and they therefore throw away their time in frivolous occupation or still more frivolous amusement. Passant la moitié de leur temps à ne rien faire, et l'autre moitié à faire des riens. But though all may not have taste or capacity for the higher branches of learning,—all may not be able to paraphrase Job or to translate Epictetus,—yet there are few who may not improve their talents, and who would not be much more agreeable, as well as useful, if their minds were cultivated and enlarged.

There are some branches of knowledge which are strictly feminine, and from which there can be no reason for discouraging the sex. We may doubt the appropriateness of the crucible and the blow-pipe, or may wish the fair naturalist a better employment than breaking stones; but what is so calculated to embellish and refine the mind as the *belles lettres* of every age and country? Only we should be always on our guard against imperfect attainment, and against making the enlargement of our sphere an excuse for being rambling and desultory.

There is a mistake with regard to languages into which women sometimes fall. They imagine that they cannot know too many tongues; and they forget that it is chiefly as a key to literature that these are valuable. Thus, when they have mastered one or two books, they are only anxious to pass on to another continental dialect. And yet, if the labor lavished on verbal criticism has sometimes been regarded as unprofitable, how much more so is that which tends to convert the mind into nothing but a dictionary!

In the same way, time is not unfrequently misspent in mere reading. The getting through a certain number of volumes is thought to be a meritorious exertion, and is looked back upon with complacency; though perhaps all this painstaking labor has been without benefit, and has done nothing towards enriching or strengthening the mind. Some read without recollecting, many more without thinking,

and many again without applying what they read to any moral or practical purpose. For, after all, literature is a mere step to knowledge, and the error often lies in our identifying one with the other. Literature may, perhaps, make us vain; true knowledge must render us humble.

We are all apt to imagine that what costs us trouble must be of value; yet there is much need of discretion both in the choice and manner of our acquirements. In both, utility should always be a question;—not the mere sordid utility which has a reference only to secular profit, and which, even with regard to science, is by no means the exclusive or primary object; but utility as it affects the mind. History, for instance, with all its accompanying branches, is in this view a suitable and most improving study. But then history, to be useful, must be digested. We may sleep through Rollin and Hume, and be really little wiser than if we had read only the newspaper.

Not unfrequently, too, are we wrong in our estimate of acquirements. We value them by their rarity; and are apt to neglect what is essential because it is easy, for the sake of what is difficult because it is uncommon.

A young woman, for example, will attempt Dante who cannot construe Metastasio, and, what is far worse, will puzzle herself with German inflections before she is familiar with Lindley Murray. We have heard of a lady who, when at a loss how to

spell a word, put a dash under the questionable letters, that if wrong it might pass for a joke. Modern education ought to prevent the necessity of such expedients. But even when women are adepts in orthography, they are not always so in syntax and punctuation; though they may affect to be linguists, it by no means follows that they are good English scholars.

It is very important, not only that the mind should be well informed, but that there should be a taste for knowledge; which should be appreciated for its own sake, not merely as a distinction. The superiority of really cultivated women is, in every thing, very apparent. They have been accustomed to think and to discriminate, and their opinion is not a mere momentary impulse. Their sphere, too, is enlarged,—they are not so much actuated by selfish feelings, or so liable to receive partial, and consequently erroneous, impressions. They view every subject more calmly, and decide more dispassionately, and are generally more correct in their own sentiments, and more liberal to those of others.

It is mediocrity that is intolerant and opinionative. A woman who, without reflection, takes up the views of others, is peculiarly accessible to party spirit. And this is one reason why women in general are more zealous partisans than the other sex; their minds are more contracted, their knowledge more confined, and their prejudices stronger. We can quite understand the strictures of Addison

on the female sectarists of his day; for, though we have no patches now to mark our distinctions, the spirit of party is equally exclusive.

As a corrective to this, as well as a preservative from error, knowledge is very useful, and in this view, perhaps, almost as much so to women as to men; especially now, in these days of progress, when every class should be prepared for its advance, and when even the female mind should be strengthened for the increase of light. What an easy dupe to empiricism or design is a half-educated woman. With sufficient acquirement to be vain and sufficient sensibility to be soon imposed on, she may be easily seduced from principles which she has received only on the authority of others, and which she is therefore ill prepared to defend. It was want of knowledge of which the priest of Rome availed himself when he assailed the female devotee with all the appliances of his superstition, and prevailed on her to forsake real duties for the quietism and asceticism of the convent. It is want of knowledge of which the modern heretic equally makes use when he too "leads captive silly women," and finds none so accessible to his influence as the weak, the sensitive, and the unenlightened. It is on this account that knowledge is so valuable an accompaniment to religion; for piety may be misguided, though it cannot be excessive; and the female mind, constitutionally less stable that that of man, needs especially the ballast of sound information and good

sense. It is apt to pursue opinions to extremes, and to allow too much to its favorite bias; and on this account an accurate acquaintance with truth of every kind is the more essential. And besides the individual benefit which accrues from such knowledge, no character commands more respect than that of the religious and cultivated woman; while it is to the credit of the sex that letters and religion have often been associated. We dwell with pleasure on the piety of Lady Jane Grey, if that of Elizabeth be questionable. And we may surely hope that she* who, when copies of the Scriptures were still scarce, presented the Hebrew Pentateuch to a scholar too poor to buy one, could herself appreciate the sacred gift. Neither can we forget more recent examples. The names of Hutchinson and Russell, of Rowe, Chapone, and Smith, of the amiable authoress of Father Clement, and of our own revered Hannah More, are together treasured in our minds as happy instances of the union of female piety and accomplishment.

We cannot, indeed, for a moment question the advantage of letters to a religious woman. They afford her occupation, refresh her mind, and increase her power of usefulness. Religion itself is an intellectual as well as spiritual exercise; and its doctrines, though level to ordinary capacities, involve

* Charity, a sister of Pirckheimerus, to whom he dedicated some of his most learned works. . .

the highest speculations. They inform and discipline, as well as spiritualize the mind; and it is delightful to observe the intelligence of many who have no other teacher.

Neither can we suppose that men are altogether averse to female literature. They would not, especially when they are themselves superior, wish to encounter, even in a female companion, the contractedness of ignorance, or the ineptitude of folly. They can have little pleasure in associating with those whose only conversation is *médisance* or gossip.

Rather would they desire to meet in a domestic circle a companion who could sympathize, if not participate, in their higher pursuits; who could appreciate literary excellence, and taste intellectual pleasure, and to whom knowledge had given elevation and refinement.

Nor would her accomplishments, in any degree, indispose her for active domestic duties. Order is the symptom of a well-regulated mind; and the woman who has felt the importance of interior arrangement will scarcely be indifferent to her household economy. And if experience has ever seemed to militate against this conclusion, the exceptions may be attributable to nature rather than education; and have probably proceeded from a constitutional defect, which intellectual discipline may have in some degree amended, but which it has not been able altogether to correct. Disorder is the accident, not the consequence, of talent; and as it is the more

conspicuous, so is it the less excused, when accompanied with mental superiority. The irregularities which proceed from indolence or frivolity receive far more indulgence.

Censorship is, indeed, always severe on female talent, and not unfrequently is a woman prejudged a slattern because reputed a genius. Slovenly attire, an ill-conducted household, and an ill-arranged table, are in the minds of many identified with female acquirement. Yet lighter accomplishments may be the more likely cause of such disorder; and she who has spent her life at her harp, or at her frame, will be less disposed to active duties than one to whom exertion is habitual. If the woman of mind bears with equanimity petty vexations, if she lends a reluctant ear to family tales, if she is not always expatiating on her economy, nor entertaining by a discussion of domestic annoyances; she is not the less capable of controlling her household, or of maintaining order in its several departments. Rather will she occupy her station with more dignity, and fulfil its duties with greater ease.

At the same time she should ever bear in mind, that knowledge is not to elevate her above her station, or to excuse her from the discharge of its most trifling duties. It is to correct vanity and repress pretension. It is to teach her to know her place and her functions; to make her content with the one, and willing to fulfil the other. It is to render her more useful, more humble, and more happy.

And surely such a woman will be, of all others, the best satisfied with her lot. She will not seek distinction, and therefore will not meet with disappointment. She will not be dependent on the world, and thus she will avoid its vexations. She will be liable to neither restlessness nor *ennui;* but she will be happy in her own home, and by her own hearth, in the fulfilment of religious and domestic duty, and in the profitable employment of her time.

CHAPTER IV.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO WOMAN.

RELIGION has been sometimes decried as the passion of weak men, women, and children. Woman may blush for the association which the ridicule involves, but she has no reason to be ashamed of her propensity. May it ever be her distinction. It is the pearl which adorns as well as enriches.

To say that she is more religious than the other sex seems, indeed, to imply a reflection on the latter; yet, if the fact be true, it is no more than might be expected. The position and habits of woman are comparatively favorable to piety. She needs solace and occupation, and religion affords her both. Without it her character is sadly defective, even in the eyes of ordinary persons. A woman may as well be without heart as without religion; and few men, however irreligious themselves, but would shrink from impiety in her. It involves a coldness and hardness of character offensive both to taste and feeling. Even when infidelity was more in vogue than it is at present, when it had almost monopolised talent and identified itself with enlightened sentiment, the few women who volunteered under its banner were treated with the contempt they de-

served. The female Quixote broke her lance in vindicating the "Rights of Women," and no one sympathized in her defeat.

The mere suspicion of irreligion lowers a woman in general esteem. It implies almost a reflection on her character, for morality cannot be secure without religion. A woman must hold no converse with the enemies of either. She knows that the romance which invests impiety with the charm of sentiment must not lie upon her table, nor must she be supposed to be acquainted with the poem which decks out vice with the witchery of song.

Religion is indeed a woman's panoply, and no one who wishes her happiness would divest her of it; no one who appreciates her virtues would weaken their best security.

There is nothing so adapted to her wants as religion. Woman has many trials, and she therefore peculiarly needs support; religion is her asylum, not only in heavy afflictions, but in petty disquietudes. These, as they are more frequent, are perhaps almost as harassing; at least they equally need a sedative influence, and religion is the anodyne. For it is religion which, by placing before her a better and more enduring happiness than this world can offer, reconciles her to temporary privations; and by acquainting her with the love of God, leads her to rest securely upon his Providence in present disappointment. It inspires her with that

true content which not only endures distress, but is cheerful under it.

Resignation is not, as we are too apt to portray her, beauty bowered in willows, and bending over a sepulchral urn; neither is she a tragic queen, pathetic only in her weeds. She is an active, as well as passive, virtue; an habitual, not an occasional, sentiment. She should be as familiar to woman as her daily cross; for acquiescence in the detail of Providence is as much a duty as submission to its result; and equanimity amid domestic irritations equally implies religious principle as fortitude under severer trials. It was the remark of one who certainly was not disposed to care for trifles, that "it required as much grace to bear the breaking of a china cup as any of the graver distresses of life."

Minor cares are indeed the province of woman; minor annoyances her burden. Dullness, bad temper, mal-adroitness, are to her the cause of a thousand petty rubs, which too often spoil the euphony of a silver voice, and discompose the symmetry of fairy features. But the confidence which reposes on divine affection, and the charity which covers human frailty, are the only specifics for impatience. These, more than the choicest cosmetics, secure permanence to beauty, and render it more truly irresistible than any extrinsic decoration.

And if religion is such a blessing in the ordinary trials of life, what a soothing balm is it in graver sorrows. From these woman is by no means

exempt; on the contrary, as her susceptibility is great, afflictions press on her with peculiar heaviness. There is sometimes a stillness in her grief which argues only its intensity, and it is this rankling wound which piety alone can heal. Nothing, perhaps, is more affecting than woman's chastened sorrow. Her ties may be severed, her fond hopes withered, her young affections blighted, yet peace may be in her breast, and heaven in her eye. If the business and turmoil of life brush away the tears of manly sorrow, and scarcely leave time for the indulgence even of sympathy; woman gathers strength in her solitary chamber to encounter and to subdue her grief. There she learns to look her sorrow in the face; there she becomes familiar with its features; there she communes with it, as with a celestial messenger; till at length she can almost welcome its presence, and hail it as the harbinger of a brighter world.

Religion, too, is the source of all her virtues. It inspires the minor as well as the more important graces. It teaches, for instance, affability; and though some seem scarcely to think it worth their while to cultivate politeness, yet courtesy is always appreciated, and is sure to make a woman liked. Not, indeed, the mere tinsel of profession, the unmeaning commonplaces of modish hypocrisy; but the overflowing of a benevolent heart, the expression of Christian sentiment, than which nothing is in reality more prepossessing. Politeness, indeed,

argues a wish to please, and an interest in the welfare of others; and there are few who are not grateful for this easy and kind attention.

Piety is so congenial to woman, that even in circles the least disposed to it some profession of it, in her, is a matter of course. Men are often religious by proxy: they reverse their ordinary privilege, and commit to female representatives their business in the house of God. Or, if they appear on ordinary occasions, it is too often matter for regret, that, in what seems to them a more serious service, they imagine themselves free to leave the church, whilst women are expected to kneel at the table.

Yet even all this proves the universal impression in favor of female piety; and it is as congenial to the pursuits of woman as to her character. It gives interest to her duties, and solace to her retirement. To the first, indeed, it is essential, for the self-denial which they involve must have its source in religion. Like all virtues, though they entail happiness, they require sacrifices. They imply effort, and precisely that effort which proceeds only from principle. Their fulfilment brings no distinction; it sometimes even interferes with it. A domestic woman will perhaps be little admired, or, at any rate, little talked of. She will be less brilliant, less fashionable, less talked of, than one less exemplary at home. She will be neither the leader of the ton at Almack's, nor a rival queen at the court of fashion. She will be neither a Helen nor a Dido.

But she will be contented. And she will owe her contentment to religion; for it is this alone which will compose and satisfy her mind. Mediocrity may, indeed, willingly take refuge in quiet life, and forego that which brought only disappointment; but there needs some potent influence to withdraw beauty from the scene of her homage, or talent from that of her display. There needs some sentiment more intense than the first flush of passion, more satisfying than the triumph of a successful flirtation, more permanent than the consciousness of a new station and dignity, to make the young aspirant content with home. She will, perhaps, feed for a while on the romance of love, and be pleased for a while with its syren fascination, and indulge for a while in the listlessness of sentimental enjoyments; but when she ceases to be idolized, when her nuptial wardrobe becomes obsolete, when *ennui* succeeds to excitement, then does she naturally seek some new impulse to relieve the monotony of domestic life. She may have talked of love in a cottage, but the rustic shed was lit up with the radiance of the drawing-room; she may have rhapsodized about sentiment in solitude, but the wilderness was peopled with the fairy forms of the brilliant assembly.

It is religion alone which can furnish such a one with solace and incentive. Nothing else can satisfy her heart. Not, indeed, a mere formal service, a dull routine of superstitious observance, resorted to at seasons, as the confessional or the penance; but

a sentiment, full of chastened fervor and pure affection; a sentiment which itself compensates for the sacrifices it requires, and substitutes a real and permanent interest for the irregular excitement of the world.

Christian ethics are the only true morality; for they are the only morality which is both universal and minute. They are not a code, but a charter; not an institute, but a principle. They give to woman precisely that dignity which is consistent with her dependence; a dignity not of station, but of feeling; which makes her morally great, but practically subordinate.

All that the world can offer her is, in fact, of little value. Neither the blaze of rank, the triumph of coquetry, nor the distinction of beauty or fashion, can really elevate her. They may all impart a mock lustre, but confer no true dignity.

Religion is her only elevating principle. It identifies itself with the movements of her heart, and with the actions of her life, spiritualizing the one and ennobling the other. Duties, however subordinate, are to the religious woman never degrading; their principle is their apology. She does not live amidst the clouds, or abandon herself to mystic excitement; she is raised above the sordidness, but not above the concerns of earth; above its disquietudes, but not above its cares.

Religion is just what woman needs. Without it she is ever restless or unhappy, ever wishing to be

relieved from duty or from time. She is either ambitious of display, or greedy of pleasure, or sinks into a listless apathy, useless to others, and unworthy of herself. But when the light from heaven shines upon her path, it invests every object with a reflected radiance. Duties, occupations, nay even trials, are seen through a bright medium; and the sunshine which gilds her course on earth is but the dawning of a far clearer day.

And if pain, rather than toil, be her penalty; if an exemption from bodily labor be more than counterbalanced by bodily weakness, it is piety alone which can lighten such a cross. This only can inspire that passive fortitude which, to her, is more essential than active strength. And, surely, religion never seems more lovely, or is more truly sublime, than when she stifles the cry of pain, and wipes the drops of anguish from the sufferer's brow; when she imparts a martyr's courage to the gentlest spirit,—when she teaches woman in the stillness of a sick chamber to bow her head in patient resignation, and to endure her trial with Christian fortitude and faith.

A woman's virtues must be genuine. They are to expand, not in the sunshine, but in the shade; and, therefore, they need some vital principle to supply the place of foreign excitement. Religion is this influence,—this germ of every grace, this sap which finds its way through every fibre, and emits the fairest blossoms without the aid of artificial heat.

The pious woman courts retirement. She seeks

not the inertness of quietism, but the calmness and regularity of domestic duty. And though she may sometimes be called to less congenial scenes,—and she will neither refuse the summons nor show a peevish reluctance to obey it,—yet her taste is *home*, for there she feels she is most useful, most happy, and has most communion with her God.

And it is the domesticating tendency of religion that especially prepossesses men in its favor, and makes them, even if indifferent to it themselves, desire it, at least, in their nearest female connections. They can securely confide in one who is under its sober influence, and whose duties and pleasures lie within the same sphere. They feel no jealousy of a sentiment which, however intense, interferes with no legitimate affection; but which makes a woman more tender, more considerate, and more sympathizing, than the most ardent passion of romance would do, or the most studied polish of the world.

But her piety must be sterling. It must be no latent form of a still restless ambition, that has exchanged the glitter of fashion for the tinsel of profession, that still finds its pleasure in a crowd, and, weary of the turmoil of the world, seeks some new and more exciting stimulus. This may indeed pass current for piety; and as it borrows from religion its lustre, so does it often recompense it with the tarnish of its faults. But that sentiment is ever suspicious that leads woman from home rather than to it, that prefers extraneous to domestic duty, that takes

her to the *conversazione* rather than to her chamber, to her confidant rather than to God.

On the contrary, what more beautiful picture is there than that of the religious and retiring woman, who is struggling, perhaps, with domestic trial, and standing, perhaps, alone in sentiment and in duty? Her path is one of difficulty, but she neither makes her trials a theme of gossiping complaints, nor avails herself of the faults of others to excite pity for herself. And if want of congeniality in those most near to her is her sore burden, if even opposition is the appointed exercise of her faith, she neither seeks notoriety by the cry of persecution, nor looks to the applause of others as a compensation for her trials at home.

It is thought very wrong, even by ordinary persons, to carry domestic secrets beyond our own walls, or to discuss the faults of our near relations with those who are comparatively indifferent. How much more tender should be the delicacy of a Christian. For, if nothing exasperates so much as the suspicion of a confidant, surely that impatience is, to say the least, most unwise which flies to a stranger for relief, and pours forth on the unwilling ear what ought to be strictly secret. It is a pity, in such a case, that decency does not impose reserve; that the complainant does not feel so identified with the faults she deplores as to shrink from their exposure; that her interest and affection do not so far prevail over

her confiding propensity as to make her keep her grievance to herself.

How much more Christian is the course of uncomplaining meekness. True, this awakens little interest; it encourages no meddling interference, it asks for no human sympathy. Perhaps, even, it may be mistaken by some for compliance or compromise. But how great is its reward.

For if there be a recompense to consistency on earth, and a happy moment to the still-struggling Christian, it is when piety receives the accomplishment of its wishes,—when the indulgence that has excused faults, the delicacy that has forborne complaint, and the kindness that has concealed infirmities, are at length appreciated; when these reiterated acts, which have long been treasured up in grateful recollection, are ascribed to their own pure principle; and when this principle is recognised as the one only source of virtue and of peace.

It is then, even in this world, that the secret prayer is answered, and the secret tears are wiped away.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY THE SOURCE OF FEMALE EXCELLENCE.

It is usual to estimate principles by their apparent results, which may be naturally viewed as no unfair criteria. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that these are the only certain tests; for in matters which involve human conduct there is so much that impedes the genuine operation of principles, that we may, not unfrequently, form a totally wrong estimate, by merely observing the actions of those who profess to be, and even are, in some measure, under their influence.

Christianity has suffered from this superficial view. The infidel points to the divisions, the wars, the persecutions, that have found their pretext in sectarian zeal; and argues the fallacy of the system from the consequences he imputes to it. The careless, irreligious person marks with a jealous eye the inconsistencies, errors, and mistakes of those whom he regards as pre-eminently pious; and concludes in favor of his own mere moral code, because he detects failures in persons who are actuated by higher motives.

This should, of course, serve as a stimulus to

Christians, since they are thus regarded as the representatives of their faith; but, whilst it does so, we must beware of allowing the partial reasoning, which would judge of a system merely by the deportment of some who profess to be its disciples. To form a correct estimate of the value of our religion, we must examine its doctrines as well as their occasional effects on individual conduct; and not imagine ourselves acquainted with its real features from the imperfect reflection which a faulty mirror may present.

Perhaps there is nothing that affords a more satisfactory internal evidence of the truth of Christianity than the practical *tendency* of its most important doctrines. It is not merely that it contains the most perfect moral code that ever was given to man; it is not merely that its commands apply to every age and station,—that the parent and the child, the master and the servant, the husband and the wife, the king and the subject, are told by it how they may best promote each other's happiness and fulfil their mutual relations; nor is it merely that it inculcates every grace from the sublimest act of self-denial to the minutest attention of courtesy; but it is because its truths involve the virtues which its precepts enjoin,—and in proportion as the former are received the latter are loved and regarded,—that we recognise in it the stamp of Infinite Wisdom. And if human imperfection never attains to the standard of

divine morality, the fault lies in the disciple, not in the doctrine; in the subject, not in the influence.

The heart, we all know, is the main-spring of conduct; and though, in spiritual ethics, we are sometimes reluctant to allow its paramount importance, there are none who, in ordinary matters, do not assume that outward actions are, for the most part, the result of its impulses. In education, especially, the slightest experience teaches us that the heart of the child is the material, on the right moulding of which depends, in great measure, the future character; and even those teachers who are unwilling to avail themselves of Christian motives are not the less sensible of the necessity of regulating and influencing the feelings. The issuing of mandates will do but little, the appeal to reason is not enough; there must be something to warm the infant heart, and to inspire it with pure and disinterested motives.

Christianity is the work of Omniscience. He who so orders the machinery of the material creation, that *that* law which maintains the stars in their courses regulates the falling of an atom, has displayed the same adapting wisdom in his moral government. The religion which bears the impress of his authority, and of which He is the immediate source, is equally universal and equally efficient in its operation with the great principle of the natural world. The individual application of Christianity, indeed, to the heart, is, in each instance, a special act of the divine will and goodness; but in its nature, in the way in which it

finds access, and in its practical tendency, it is suited, in a peculiar manner, to every rational being.

And it is *this* which constitutes its value. Whilst it operates upon feelings which are common to all, it does so in a manner the best calculated to promote the happiness and improvement of each. It furnishes each with individual consolation, with motives for individual duty; and, by its influence on the heart, even when the express precept is wanting, it directs the individual action.

It is well known that women have been overlooked in almost every humanly devised system of religion and of ethics. The manly virtues found their place in the tables of lawgivers, and were discussed in the schools of philosophers; but the graces which adorn the female character were not thought worthy the attention of the nobler sex. And, to adduce a still more striking instance, the prophet of Mecca, when he denied to women a spiritual existence, did but prepare them for the moral degradation to which it was his policy that they should be perpetually subjected.

But it is the glory of Christianity to elevate the weak; and to do so by ennobling their virtues, and giving them a higher stimulus. Lowliness, gentleness, meekness, have an honorable place in the Christian calendar; and these graces, so especially appropriate to women, are the peculiar and exclusive products of the Christian soil.

In estimating, then, the value of religious princi-

ple to the sex, it is of importance that we should be acquainted with its nature; and should thus be qualified to judge of its probable operations. The mistake of many lies in an erroneous conception of what Christianity really is. Some are satisfied with a mere profession, others with a party name; some again identify it with a garb, or a phrase, or a ceremony; and a very numerous class with a partial performance of duty, and a decent observance of form. No wonder that these several persons present results unfavorable to religion; and that, instead of impressing us with the beauty of holiness, they show themselves to be, in no degree, superior to others who have less pretension. For they misunderstand the essence of their religion; and instead of receiving it in its perfect unity and symmetrical proportion, they mutilate and spoil what is, in its nature, incapable of being divided.

The tendency of Christian doctrine, when, through the Divine Spirit, it finds access to the heart, is, to form the character of women as well as men according to the most perfect model; and as it operates in the one to produce strength, and courage, and true greatness of soul, so does it in the other to infuse those lovely and feminine graces which are the true beauty of the sex. In its leading doctrines, indeed, one almost feels that the daughters of Eve are pre-eminently regarded; for its principles are so peculiarly calculated to affect the heart of woman, and to produce in her what is lovely and of good report,

that we cannot but recognise in their appointment the same condescending goodness that first pitied and blessed the mother of mankind, and raised her from the depth of her primeval fall. That temper, for instance, which is the first genuine fruit of divine grace, and the immediate consequence of a belief in the elements of the Gospel, is the most appropriate to female character, and the groundwork of female excellence. Nothing surely can tend to infuse genuine humility so much as a discovery of the secret workings of the human heart, and a comparison of its innate and acquired evil with the perfect purity of the law of God.

And what will teach us this but Christianity? The reflecting mind, indeed, cannot fail of detecting every where in nature something that is wrong. It will see vice and misery in the world around; it will inquire their cause, and it will trace their seeds even within itself. But will it ever humble itself on this account,—will it ever bend in self-abasement, and mourn in the ashes of a sincere repentance? Will it ever even understand what sin is, or feel its malignity as an act of rebellion against God, and an offence to His holiness? Will it not, rather, when the first sentiment of melancholy at the contemplation of evil has worn away, congratulate itself on its comparative exemption; and, forgetting its own points of resemblance to what is so mischievous and hateful, only pride itself on the difference, of which natural disposition, education, or philosophy,

or a freedom from temptation, may have been the cause?

How different is the effect which a reception of Christian doctrine is calculated to produce. It is not merely that it brings thoughts and actions to the one unerring standard, and shows the imperfection of human attainment,—nor is it merely that it displays the universality of the evil principle, and traces it to its source; but it melts to contrition whilst it humbles to abasement, and infuses that lowly but confiding spirit which weeps for its own unworthiness, and reposes in the mercy of Heaven.

And what must be the tendency of such a principle? Not surely to excite spiritual pride; to render its possessor self-satisfied, or assuming; to disqualify from duty, or to elevate to fanatical excitement. No. When such effects are seen, they are not chargeable on true religion, they are not the result of evangelical doctrine; they are melancholy instances of the power of that evil one, whose most dangerous form is that of an angel of light, and who spreads his most fatal lures *nearest* the narrow path that leads to the eternal city.

Of such let Christians, and especially Christian women, beware. It becomes the disclaimers of merit in the sight of God to let their humility, like their other graces, shine before men. And it cannot be that those who in their chamber smite upon their breasts, and raise the cry for mercy, and confess themselves the least of God's saints, and the

lowest of His servants, should rise from their knees with an unhumbled spirit, and display, to their fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians, conduct that discovers more of vanity and exclusiveness than of meekness and charity. At least, in proportion as tempers so opposite to Christianity are indulged, the heart is yet unsanctified, or the tempter prevails, or the old leaven predominates.

None are more prone to detect a want of humility in social relations, than those who are themselves deficient in genuine humility, as it regards their spiritual concerns. It is not unfrequent for persons, naturally amiable, to mistake their amiability for a Christian attainment; and to be so satisfied with the composure of their tempers, and the decent and even tenor of their lives, as to be almost ignorant of the wrong bias which they have inherited, and insensible to the moral taint which they have contracted. Self-examination is, with them, an exercise little thought of, and still less understood; and the confession of sinfulness, periodically in their mouths, has become so habitual, that it conveys no precise meaning as it passes through their lips.

There is, nevertheless, sometimes much to love, and even to respect, in persons of this class; and those who are better instructed should, at least, treat them with tenderness, and should, especially, beware of giving them offence; and, whilst they endeavor to rouse them from their indifference, and enlighten their consciences, and convince them of

their deficiencies, they may not think scorn to learn from their quiet and amiable deportment.

Every doctrine of Scripture has its corresponding precept; and as humility is the fruit of a belief in divine truth, so is it especially enjoined by the highest authority. And there is no more beautiful illustration of true principle than the humble follower of the Redeemer,—the female disciple,—who, exemplary in duty, and unwearied in religious service, is yet as remarkable for gentleness and lowliness towards her fellow-creatures, as she is for piety towards her God.

Still, if there be one feature more remarkable than another in the Christian scheme, and that bears more strikingly the impress of Deity, it is the appeal that is made to us in the appointed method of salvation, and the directly practical tendency of the characteristic tenet of our faith: for if any thing can impress the heart, and win on its affections, it is the revelation made to us in the Gospel, and the offer of pardon and peace through the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God. There may be indeed much to impress us with the divine beneficence in the material world,—the hourly preservation of life and health is an individual mercy; the mother cannot look upon the group around her, happy in their young existence, without having cause to recognise the superintending providence of God; but what would all this be, were there a veil thrown over the future, or a doubt as to our eternal resting-place?

But, thanks be to God, it is not so; and Christianity, in assuring us of our future destiny, furnishes us with a motive for gratitude and exertion far more powerful, and more constraining, than human imagination could conceive. Heaven is purchased at a price which none can believe without rendering to Him who gave it the homage of their hearts. The female Christian, especially, will not forget the share her sex has had both in the fall and restoration of the human race; and, consequently, the peculiar claims which the Author of her redemption has on her love and service. And, if it is the characteristic of woman to be accessible to kindness, and to yield to the impulses of tender feeling; how can she withhold her affections where the demand for them is so paramount, and where they may be so safely and so properly rendered? To her the gates of the second Eden are still thrown open,—to her was given, even at the foot of the tree of her apostasy, the promise of gratuitous admission to the tree of life; how anxious then should she be to prove herself not unworthy of the mercy she has received!

There is no sentiment more appropriate to her than the dependence which a belief in this revelation of divine goodness affords. Self-righteousness and arrogance are excluded by the Christian scheme; and in their place are filial confidence, and humble yet rejoicing hope. And these are the tempers which sit so engagingly on the female sex, and accord so sweetly with their character. Nothing is so

cold and heartless as the system which builds on human merits,—nothing so unbecoming in woman as a proud reliance on her own sufficiency and attainments. Christianity makes her just what she should be; and is the source of that humble, happy disposition, which renders her amiable and obliging towards others, and contented, whatever be her portion here.

And by impressing her with a sense of what she owes to infinite bounty, it expands her heart towards all who, with her, are recipients of the same grace. Christian charity may well maintain its place as the first of virtues. Unknown as it was to the heathen world, unknown as it now is to any but believers, its fruits are so fair that they cannot fail of exciting the admiration of even those who do not understand its principle. It is the expansion of the divine benevolence,—the reflection of that love that saved mankind. Pity that any who call themselves Christians, still greater pity that any who believe the doctrines and respect the precepts of the Gospel, should be deficient in this pre-eminent grace.

Yet, with regard to men, allowance may be made for peculiar trial or circumstance; for provocation, for the heat of debate, or the excitement of controversy. Christian women have no such excuse. And, surely, if they have truly imbibed the principles of their faith, they will not suffer their lesser disturbances to excite in them tempers equally unworthy their sex and their profession. Nor will

they expose themselves to temptation, by entering uncalled upon dangerous ground;—they will avoid, when they can, religious as well as other dispute; and whilst they *study* with humility the divine word, and receive with implicit faith what is there revealed, they will recommend its doctrines as much by their example as by their gentle and persuasive influence; for in their conduct they will show much of that charity which suffereth long and is kind. It is astonishing what a woman may often effect by forbearance and by tenderness. In domestic life, for instance, what so likely to disarm prejudice, or to recall affection, or to calm an irritable temper, as, not merely patience under vexations, but the soft and soothing expression of genuine kindness? Perhaps there is no situation of greater difficulty or delicacy than that of a woman associated with one whose disposition and habits are ill-assorted with her own. Yet, even here, a Christian need not despair. There is, of course, much of judgment and tenderness required; but her religion may teach her both. It will teach her to love as well as to endure; and, by supplying her with a motive for her exertions, will render her more unwearied in her efforts to please.

It is scarcely possible to suggest a precise line in such a case; but this, however, may safely be affirmed, that there is no guide like religion. But then it must be a principle active and efficient, and in daily operation. There must be no shrinking

from those acts of domestic self-denial, which are the more rare and the more difficult, because they attract little notice. Neither must there be a neglect of minute duties, of slight courtesies, of trifling concessions.

And, especially, there must be respect. This is a duty congenial with the whole spirit of the Gospel, and expressly enjoined on female Christians. Yet we have to lament its deficiency, sometimes, even in good women; and this is, perhaps, one reason why they are less appreciated at home than elsewhere. Respect, like all other duties, must be habitual; it must not merely be kept for public exhibition; though in society, of course, deference is indispensable; but it must be maintained in the privacy of the married hearth, and in the familiarities of confidential intercourse. There are a thousand little instances in which respect may be shown,—in attentiveness, in consideration, in a readiness to hear and to be taught. Suppose a woman to *be* superior, and suppose her to have both intellectual endowment and religious excellence; suppose her, too, to have reason to complain of indifference or neglect: yet surely there is some point in which she might learn from her husband; some quality or endowment for which she might respect him; some particular in which she might defer to his judgment, and acquiesce in his opinions. Why should she be always on the defensive?—why seem to imagine that *he* must be always wrong? Would it not be

better to seek to discover subjects of union rather than of difference? for, in doing so, as she would be acting from the highest principle, and discharging the first of social duties, she might expect a blessing.

There is one question of peculiar nicety by which a tender conscience may be harassed. It arises from the apparent interference of religious and conjugal duty. Where, of course, there is an actual interference the latter must give way. But the case is often dubious, and rendered more so by inclination being sometimes mistaken for conscience, or by motives of a very mixed nature being associated with the simple desire of serving God.

It should always be the first inquiry, whether a little more effort, a little more self-denial, a little more anxiety to fulfil the one obligation without leaving the other undone, would not smooth the way; whether, for instance, the hour of privacy might not be secured without interfering with that of domestic enjoyment, and the ordinance observed without the neglect of family attentions.

But in all these minutiæ, it is love, Christian love only, that can solve the question, and assign the right line of conduct; and the more we are influenced by it, the less shall we be perplexed by scrupulosity. It will infuse, too, a spirit and a life into our duties. In all social relations every thing is spoilt by an appearance of effort. The parent receives no pleasure from the obedience of a child, if it be the service of constraint; the husband is

indifferent to all the attentions of a wife, if they are cold and compulsory. Where the heart is required, nothing can repay for its absence; and a sensitive mind is pained rather than pleased by a tribute from which the choicest ingredient is wanting.

On the contrary, Christian love, as it ascends first to its fountain, is conducted from thence, in due proportion, into every legitimate earthly channel. See in the good daughter, listening to her parents' counsels, valuing their instructions, seeking their society, ministering to their comfort, and, lastly, soothing their infirmities, and closing their eyes, the earliest exemplification of Christian social love. See her again in after life, blessing and being blest, the friend of her husband, the joy of his home, the messenger of good to all who feel her sweet and gentle influence. See her in her family; the tender nurse, the patient instructress, the sympathizing and forgiving counsellor, receiving back from her children the recompense of her own filial affection.

Nor, in such a person, is the development of the principle confined to her own home. As a friend she is kind, while faithful, constant, and yet impartial. Without indulging in romantic fondnesses, which are often as fickle as they are excessive, she has a heart to bestow on those who are worthy of it, and she is ready to reciprocate their affection. She can appreciate, too, true excellence, wherever she meets with it, and does not allow prejudice or party feeling to interfere with her estimate of worth. Far

is it from her to indulge in harshness of expression, still farther to offer the challenge and provoke the attack; she is a "meek daughter in the family of Christ;"—all her words are gentle, all her tone is feminine; and whether she relieve distress, or communicate instruction, or render a slight courtesy, she evinces the same warm and sympathizing heart, the same tender and graceful hand.

There is yet one feature of religion which involves female excellence, and which is essential to the moral proficiency of the sex. Christian holiness, the effect of spiritual influence on the heart, as it is the root of all virtue, so is it the only principle which imparts unity and consistency to the character. It is the seed sown by the divine hand, and watered from above, which proves its celestial origin by the fruit it bears.

We look in vain for real and persevering goodness from any other source. There may be a kind disposition, a happy temper, a liberal, open hand; there may be a burst of feeling, or a sudden impulse to what is noble and disinterested; or, what is still more frequent, a thirst for human applause, which may induce extraordinary effort. But where is the steady course of virtuous self-denial, pursued alike in public and in private, amid disappointment and success; except it be the result of Christian motive, and of that heaven-born principle, the end of which is conformity to Him whom it acknowledges as its Author?

It is just this uniform excellence which we require in woman. In men, it is, of course, no less valuable; but still, as their virtues are for the most part more important, and more prominent, we are disposed to make greater allowance for their faults. They have their redeeming points, and, on this account, we excuse some blemishes. But in woman we expect proportion. Beauty is her attribute, that *moral* and *mental* grace, which, by its genuine and finished loveliness, wins upon the heart. And this cannot be without consistency. It is in vain that there is the occasional virtue, the partial observance of what is right; it is in vain that the tear of sympathy is sometimes seen to flow, and the purse to open at the call of benevolence; it is in vain even that there is a painful and laborious effort in the discharge of some duties, or an apparent zeal in the one good cause; unless there is a tone of excellence pervading the character, and evincing its daily fruits in domestic and social life, we are struck by the deficiency, and are more inclined to find fault with *it* than to admire the incidental virtue.

The proficiency, however, of which we have been speaking, is not of sudden or of easy attainment. Amid the trials and temptations which assail us here, how highly blessed are they who are enabled, through divine grace, to persevere in the right path without retrogression. But, in the appointed means of spiritual improvement, the female Christian will seek renewal of her strength, and, setting before her

her high exemplar, will not be satisfied without an approach to it. It is this which will stimulate her to duty, purify her wishes, and exalt her hopes; and whilst it is to her a motive for daily progress, it will also act as a remembrancer that her recompense is above, and consists in a full and entire assimilation to that perfect model, to which she is now faintly and feebly approximating. She will pursue her course, it may be, through discouragement and difficulty; but she will be cheered by the prospect that is before her; and her latest thought will be, an anticipation of that entire union to divine excellence, for which she is educating here.

CHAPTER VI.

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIVE OF FEMALE CHARACTER.

BESIDES the blessing which Christianity is to us as a motive for our moral improvement, it is also most valuable as a rule of conduct. We are not left merely to the influence of its principles on the heart; the effect which they ought to have is specified, and we are thus furnished with a test, by which we may judge how far we are really affected by them, and also with directions to assist us in their practical result.

These directions, no less than the doctrines with which they are so nearly allied, have the divine sanction; and attest, like them, the wisdom and goodness of their Author. They are given in a way the best calculated to interest and influence, and are of as universal an application as the principles from which they spring.

The manner in which woman is noticed in the practical parts of Scripture accords with the place she is allowed to hold in the Christian economy. The precepts which are to regulate female conduct are equally precise with those which apply to the other sex, and the examples equally instructive.

We cannot, indeed, but be peculiarly struck with

the natural and appropriate, as well as beautiful, delineation of female character in Scripture. No point is overcharged, no virtue exaggerated. The portrait is the more affecting because it is so like. It is the gentle, tender, and feeling woman whom we meet with in real life; and though the sublime situations in which she is placed, as well as the language and imagery of Scripture, invest the heroine of the Bible with a peculiar charm, she is not so highly raised above ordinary circumstances as not to provoke our sympathy and invite our imitation.

On this account the illustrations of the sacred volume are of the highest value. The female Christian who is familiar with them needs few other models. Besides the chasteness and simplicity which characterize these examples, there is a detail about them which is not only graphically true, but practically instructive. It is not merely by their prophetic visions, or inspired songs, that we are made acquainted with the female worthies of the ancient church; we converse with them in their homes; we see them in the discharge of family and social functions; and we find, in general, that those who were the most highly honored by divine favor were the most blameless and amiable, according to our ideas of female excellence.

The Bible might, therefore, be recommended, were it only for its moral illustrations; and those who think lightly of its mysteries are often not without appreciation of its value in this point of view.

But mutilation, whilst it robs the Christian system of its beauty, spoils its effect. There is no part independent of another; take it in its perfect gradation, the harmony is complete; but the abstraction of a single principle cannot be without prejudice to the whole.

On the contrary, those who receive the truths of Scripture on the sanction of their Author, and, therefore, give due weight to every part, are enabled to admire their aggregate completeness, as well as their individual perfection. The female believer, for instance, whilst she acknowledges with gratitude the interest she has in the doctrines of the Gospel, is no less affected by the regard paid to her sex in the Scripture development of their character. With regard to the latter, especially, she cannot but feel it to be a peculiar mark of condescension that there should be such minute and instructive notices; and that, by the setting forth of examples in various circumstances, and in the different ranks of life, she should be left at no loss as to the application of the divine precepts.

Nor can she help remarking the impartiality and the truth of scriptural illustrations. Woman is described with the virtues and the faults peculiar to her sex; and whilst we admire her enthusiasm, her tenderness, and her devotion, whilst we see of how much she is capable, how greatly she has been honored, and for what she has been destined, we are not allowed to be blind to her weaknesses.

It is thus that so much may be learnt from the study of the Scriptures. Not only is the Bible in this way infinitely superior to all fictitious narrative, but few histories contain such accurate and impartial delineations. The Bible tells us what woman has been, what she may be, and what she is. And if she would be guided in the path of duty, if she would know her dangers, her temptations, and her foibles, if she would be made acquainted with her own heart, she will read and meditate upon the inspired volume, and will study there what is so accurately described, either as encouragement or as warning.

The earliest example recorded is eminently illustrative of female character. The mother of mankind was truly the representative of her sex. She fell because she was over-confident in herself, and because she was prevailed on to desire what was prohibited. And if this conveys a salutary caution to her female descendants, and a caution of which they stand too frequently in need, how sweet a lesson may they learn from her lowly penitence, her humble yet rejoicing hope. She fell; but in the depth of her abasement she caught the brightness of the promise, and saw, in the east, the dawn of the Sun of Righteousness rising on her benighted children with healing in his wings. Long and patiently did she wait his coming; and, though her first-born hopes ended in worse than disappointment, though it was her lot to experience the bitterest of

maternal griefs, and to lose two children through the crime of one, still she persevered in believing; and when called again to the solicitudes and duties of a mother, recognised in her offspring a pledge of the divine truth. She died in hope, and her expectation was inherited by her descendants. It was the peculiar privilege of the daughters of the chosen seed; it inspired the song of the prophetess, and nerved the arm of the female warrior, and gave to the peaceful mother of Israel higher thoughts and nobler anticipations than could have been enjoyed by any less privileged matron. And it continued to cheer the female believers of the ancient church, until faith was lost in fulfilment, and the salutation of the angel announced the completion of the promise, as he greeted the virgin of the house of David the mother of Emanuel.

A hope so heavenly and so pure is peculiarly appropriate to woman. Nothing is more delightful in her than a disposition to anticipate good. Women have their share in the trials of life, and they have, perhaps, less strength than the other sex to encounter them; but to hope is their privilege and their distinction; and often does this bear them up, and help them even to bear up others, when minds of greater firmness, but less buoyancy, fail. The captive daughter of Judah felt her fetters lightened when she thought of Him who was to be her deliverer, and whose glory it should be to lead captivity captive. And Christian hope is the same sentiment

modified and matured. It is less imaginative, but more spiritual; less exclusive, but more amiable; it has less of rapture, perhaps, but it has stronger assurance. It is the light which guides the female pilgrim through the path of life, the evening star, "serenely brilliant," that sheds its hallowed lustre on her bed of death.

With equal truth the Bible portrays other graces of female character. How pathetically, for instance, is that sensibility depicted which gives to woman so much softness and grace; which is in her the impulse to a thousand disinterested actions; which leads her to cling, like Ruth to Naomi, to those whom she loves, or to watch, like Rizpah, the objects of her solicitude, or to make, like the widow of Zarephath, any sacrifice of self, to minister to those who have a claim upon her service.

And how marked is the difference in the delineation of this virtue between the mere affecter of sentiment and the woman of real feeling! This distinction is strikingly exemplified in the two daughters of the widowed Mara. Orpah sheds the most tears, Orpah is the most loud in protestation, Orpah even sets out on her pilgrimage, and turns her face towards Canaan, but Orpah lifts up her voice, and bids adieu; Ruth is silent, and goes on.

The character of Orpah is true to life, and affords a salutary warning. No less genuine is that of Ruth, and she furnishes a sweet exemplification of filial piety and devotedness. She is one of those

gentle, affectionate, confiding creatures, who, though they make no noise in the world, are capable of great efforts. She is one of those whom, following their quiet and unassuming course, God delighteth to honor. She, like Hannah, reposed all her cares in the bosom of her God; and He heard and relieved her.

The tenderness of female piety is every where affectionately exhibited in the holy women in the Bible. How different is their devotion from the imaginative mysticism of the enthusiast. It is, indeed, glowing and affectionate; but it is calm and reverential. We see Mary, gazing on her Divine Master, listening to every word that fell from his lips, pouring her costly ointment on his head, watching his last agony, prostrating herself in almost speechless joy before his risen form; but all these actions, whilst they denote the tenderness of the friend, mark also the respect of the disciple. And Martha, too, though she, on one occasion, mistook the way to pay honor to him, whose thoughts were not of this world; what can be more affectionate than her greeting at the tomb of Lazarus? And what more blessed than the memorial of each, "now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus?"

The piety of these holy women was of a subdued and chastened character; and whilst it chained their hearts to the object of their affections, it never suffered them to forget their homage. And their language, like their sentiment, was that adoration.

They indulged in no undue familiarity, they did not adopt the language of earthly passion; but, whilst they consecrated to Christ their choicest affections, their manner of addressing him was such as became dependent creatures. They reverenced and worshipped as well as loved. And they persevered in their attachment to the end; for they were the latest to linger at the cross; they received his dying words; and though they understood not yet the mystery of a crucified Messiah, they paid the last tribute of respect to Jesus of Nazareth.

Their spirit descended on their sisters in the Christian church. It was this that warmed their hearts, and prompted their kindness to the members of Christ's body. It was this that characterized the benevolent and painstaking Dorcas, and the attentive and devout Lydia; that induced Priscilla to "hazard her life" for the apostle of the Gentiles, and Phœbe to succor him in his necessity; and that obtained for the "beloved Persis," and for the little band of Roman disciples, the honorable commendation, that they "labored much in the Lord." Theirs was not a mere holiday profession, or a transient emotion; it was not a tribute to the eloquence of Paul, the earnestness of Peter, or the sweetness of John; it was a principle that triumphed over weakness, and bestowed a supernatural courage; that enabled the tender and delicate woman to meet even the severest trial, and to stretch forth her hand for the martyr's crown.

And we may remark the same feeling in the devout women of an earlier age. For it was this which encouraged Esther to dare the frown of her sovereign, and emboldened Rahab to risk her safety for the messengers of God. It is religion, indeed, which inspires true courage, and precisely that quiet and enduring courage which is essential to female greatness. Women are not called on now to assume, like Deborah, the sword of the warrior; but they are called on to compete with trials which require equal strength of mind. And it is the same principle which must bear them through, the principle of heavenly love, the habitual preference of things divine to things earthly, the unostentatious disinterestedness, which is ever ready to seek the good and happiness of others at the expense of selfish enjoyment. And what a peculiarly amiable feature is this in the character of woman. It is frequently her duty to yield her own wishes. Domestic peace may require it; and, at any rate, she should always cultivate the spirit of self-denial; and by doing so in lesser matters, she will be preparing herself, in the best way, for greater efforts.

Again, what grace do we admire more than delicacy in woman, that delicacy which knows how to render even a kindness more acceptable; and which, by studying the tastes and habits of others, can adapt and time its attentions? And where can we find a more pleasing specimen of this than in the conduct of the Shunammite? What can be more appro-

priately considerate than her provision for Elisha? Where is there a better example for a Christian matron? The prophet might not find the table of the great man at Shunem at all times a congenial resting-place. It was not for one who was mourning over the desolations of his country, and, like his master Elijah, very jealous for the Lord of Hosts, to hear the voice of singing men and singing women, or to be frequently a guest at the festive board. His pious hostess felt this, and therefore provided him a suitable asylum. She built for him a secluded chamber; she furnished it with a table and a cushion, that the holy man might be tempted to turn aside, and bless the house that had provided him so kind a shelter. We should expect to find, in such a woman, the resignation that would say, under all the dispensations of Providence, "It is well."

These and similar illustrations are the best comment on the divine doctrines and precepts. It is thus that Scripture is its own interpreter, and that one part is explanatory and corroborative of another. It is thus, too, that its study amply repays us; for the Bible is a rich and inexhaustible mine, from which we may, each of us, draw precious ore, to apply to our individual use.

There are other instances less pleasing, though, perhaps, little less instructive, which show the darker side of female character, and mark the inconsistencies and sins into which even the favored of Heaven were occasionally betrayed. The propensity, for

example, to compass by stratagem what may not be obtained by more direct means, is noted in some who ought to have been superior to such artifice. The history of Rebecca is a painful illustration of this unhappy failing. We sympathize in her maternal solicitude; we cannot wonder at her preferring the gentle and amiable Jacob to his rude and graceless brother: but when we see her busied in preparing the mock venison, in decking out her favorite in rough disguise, and thus seeking to cheat the dim vision of the declining patriarch; we cannot but feel that she is acting, towards Jacob, the part of the temptress, and herself furnishing one of the first sad exemplifications of the fatal sophism, "doing evil that good may come." Her punishment implies the censure passed upon her fault. We infer how displeasing it was to God from the punishment he inflicted. She saw her son no more.

Again, we notice the same failing in the women of Pekoah; in Michal, though the preservation of David was her apology; and in Jael, though she was the commissioned instrument of God. But do we not learn from even these examples to appreciate the opposite virtue, the simplicity that knows no guile?

In like manner, the few instances recorded of female crime are calculated to impress us with a sense of its exceeding deformity. There is nothing so repugnant to our feelings as an impious or a wicked woman; and there is no better guard against sin

than a faithful portraiture of what it is. The ambitious Athaliah; the persecuting Jezebel; the cruel Herodias, and her syren daughter; are melancholy exemplifications, and stand forth in the sacred page in sad pre-eminence of guilt. We learn from each of these to what excesses pride, or revenge, or irreligion, or even vanity, may lead; and such instances are remembered as evidences of the moral plague, and as the work of him who was a murderer from the beginning. They are fearful warnings; but let none who inherit our fallen nature say that they are needless. The same passions exist, in embryo, in every heart, and need only liberty and provocative. The mild, and amiable, and gentle woman may bless God for his restraining grace; and the better she becomes acquainted with herself, the more apt will she be to commiserate those who have given way to evil.

It is a gratifying reflection, that in the illustrations of Scripture there is a considerable preponderance in favor of female worth; and that there are very many examples from the contemplation of which we may receive pleasure as well as instruction. We dwell with delight on the simplicity, the gentleness, the goodness, and the humility of those whose names are written in the book of life; and whilst we take them for our models, rejoice to find that they are adapted to our imitation.

In the study of these good women, there is nothing that strikes us as more remarkable than their strictly

feminine deportment. From the wife of Abraham to the wife of Aquilla, there was none who forgot her subordinate station, or who wished to diverge from it. We hear of the holy mothers of old, who adorned themselves with meekness,—of their faith, their piety, their self-denial, their patience; but we hear of no unbecoming intrusion on their part, no murmuring against appointments, no contempt or censure of authorized teachers. On the contrary, we only notice in them a respectful and grateful submission to instruction, and a zealous fulfilment of prescribed duty. They were well reported of for good works, they ministered to the saints, they relieved the afflicted; but they interfered in no sacred office, and "they were not permitted to speak in the churches."

One instance only is mentioned, and that even of an inspired woman, who presumed on her own attainments and dared to impugn the meek ministers of God. And surely the reproof passed on her may afford a salutary admonition to all who, in every age, may be infected with her temper, and who, without her gifts, may have all her impatience of control. Miriam bewailed her fault, and humbled herself before God and man. And we may rest assured that subordination is a Christian as well as feminine duty; and that nothing is less pleasing to the Almighty than a contumacious or an aspiring spirit.

In fine, the illustrations of female character in Scripture are equally encouraging and instructive

The attentive hearer of God's word, the pious mother, the Christian mistress of a household, the reliever of the necessitous, the visiter of the sick, are all had in honorable remembrance. Their good deeds are thought worthier of being recorded than more brilliant exploits; and they afford both a stimulus and a pattern to all who wish to resemble them.

CHAPTER VII.

FEMALE INFLUENCE ON RELIGION.

The promotion of religious feeling is one of the greatest blessings of female influence. Yet the more qualified women are to adorn and recommend piety, the more important is it that they should not mistake or misapply their power. They may be really useful, they may, by their gentle persuasion, enforce truth, they may cause religion to be loved for their sake; how necessary, then, is it that they should study the means by which they may be the honored instruments of doing so much good. How unhappy that they should ever mistake their line, bring a prejudice on their profession, and mar their own acceptance.

Religion is peculiarly their province; and never is their influence so well employed as in recommending it. Never is woman so truly delightful as when she is the advocate for piety; and when, by a consistent and holy conversation, she exemplifies the principles which she wishes to enforce.

Her influence, indeed, is chiefly in example. This is her best persuasive. By witnessing the effects of religion in her, men learn to appreciate its value. If it makes her more domestic, more self-denying,

more kind, more contented, and more agreeable, they will, at least, respect it.

Experience proves the efficacy of this silent appeal. How often has it prevailed when a more direct one has been unsuccessful. And it is peculiarly appropriate to woman. None can find fault with her for consistency or virtue. None can blame her because she is more meek, more forgiving, more benevolent, more courteous, than others who are less religious On the contrary, these graces secure to her an influence, and often pave the way for the reception of her opinions. If, in the early dawn of Christian light, woman was often honored as its harbinger; if, even in the imperial palace, the apostle found in her no feeble advocate; and, at the semi-barbarous court, the missionary hailed her as his kind and fostering friend,—was it not by her personal character that she mainly recommended truth, and advocated the doctrines she had herself learnt to prize?

And so it is now. Women may often outlive prejudice. They may be so exemplary in their discharge of social duty, so pious towards their parents, so affectionate to their husbands, so devoted to their children; they may so grace and enliven the family circle; that their religion, which at first might have been considered their only defect, is at length valued, and, perhaps, even adopted. Many a pious son has recorded his debt of gratitude to a Christian mother, many a Christian mother has sown, like Monaca,*

* The mother of St. Augustin.

the seed in sorrow, and, like Monaca too, has had reason to rejoice when it has returned seven-fold into her bosom.

And the influence of a religious woman may extend far beyond her own home. She may be the Priscilla, or the Lydia, or the Dorcas, of a village; sympathizing with the necessities of the poor, denying herself to relieve them; and availing herself of the access thus obtained to their affections, to lead them to the one only source of consolation.

Such a one must be loved. She has a witness in the hearts of those around her, and they cannot but appreciate principles which produce such results.

Nor are there occasions wanting for more direct influence. An humble-minded Christian will not intrude her sentiments, or interfere officiously; but she will feel it her duty to do what she can: and a word spoken in season is seldom without effect. There have been instances when the gentle rebuke of female piety has availed to silence the scoffer, or put the infidel to blush; when the kind and faithful admonition of female friendship has stopped the young in their career of folly; and when the cheering voice of woman has soothed the suffering and fortified the fainting Christian. And it is the duty of every woman to bring all her influence to bear upon the side of piety, and to be herself the personification of Christian grace; to identify her interests with those of religion, and to prove, by the consis-

tency of her own conduct, that she is in earnest in all that she endeavors to enforce.

Women have many opportunities of doing good peculiar to themselves. The gentleness and delicacy natural to the sex, and which they ought especially to cultivate, may teach them to communicate in a pleasant manner what might otherwise be unpalatable; and even their playfulness is not without its use. For a few words, spoken in frank good humor, may convince, when more formal instruction would be unavailing; and a look of affectionate remonstrance may convey a lesson more effective than a louder appeal.

> "But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
> Darts, O beloved woman! nor such thoughts,
> Dim and unhallowed, dost thou not reject,
> And biddest me walk humbly with my God."*

Thus privileged, it is surely the duty of all, who have really the good cause at heart, to try, as far as in them lies, to promote it; and whilst they make it a subject of endeavor and of prayer that opportunities may not pass by them unimproved, they should also not neglect to cultivate whatever may render them and their religion more acceptable.

But whatever they attempt, in the way of influencing others, should be done in an appropriate spirit. Religion demands and inculcates humility. It involves subjects so important and so deep, that lowli-

* Coleridge

ness is the only fitting temper for the Christian; and we cannot but question the nature of that influence which leads to any opposite result. Least of all can pretension be excused where the subject is so vast and the capacity so limited; where, if woman assume, she only discovers her weakness; and where she should esteem it her privilege to follow and to learn.

There is a great difference between being religious and affecting the theologian. Yet these are too often confounded; and women who, perhaps, are not remarkable for intellectual endowment, imagine, that because they are in earnest about spiritual concerns, they are qualified to enter the thorny path of controversy. This is, however, a great mistake. Not only is controversy, for the most part, unedifying, and very inappropriate to the gentler sex; but it often diverts them from profitable contemplation and important duties. Besides, it is apt to make them opinionative and dogmatical; and to lead them to throw their influence rather into the scale of party than into that of true religion.

Religion was, perhaps, never more talked of than it is at present. Not only is it the heart-enlivening topic amongst Christian friends; but serious conversation is often the passport to society, and the means of elevating individuals above their natural rank in life. There are thus many temptations to spurious piety, and there are many, too, to female vanity; for a slight proficiency in religious knowledge ren-

ders women fluent, and they may mistake mere facility of expression for real feeling.

And have we not reason to deplore the errors into which they are, in this way, occasionally betrayed? Do we not sometimes see even young women arrogating to themselves the right, not merely of private judgment, but of dictation, descanting on the conflicting questions which agitate the religious world; or enouncing with unhesitating confidence some new conceit, to which the caprice or ignorance of modern empiricism has given birth? And, at length, do we not see them become the tools of some interested fanatic; or the disciples of some scarcely less culpable, though more honest, zealot; to whose keeping they have delivered their consciences; whose varying opinions they are pledged to adopt and to support; and whom they credulously and emulously follow through all the phases of his eccentric orbit?

It is with grief that we view such wanderings from the right path. It is not the excess, but the misapplication of zeal that we lament; it is not that such persons do too much for religion, nor that they have it too much at heart; but that they mistake wherein it consists, and that they identify it with their own opinions, or with mere excitement. No one can be too self-denying, or too energetic, in what is really the Christian cause; but the error lies in the misapprehension of the object. And this is not surprising, for there is often more to attract in what is uncommon and extravagant than in genuine piety,

and more distinction in becoming the peripatetic professor of a novel creed, than in the assiduous discharge of ordinary Christian duty.

The being eccentric is an inducement to many persons. They think there is something imposing in that singularity which despises the prejudices and differs from the habits of those around them. It has, it must be confessed, its influence on weak or morbid minds; and, therefore, we cannot wonder that those who are ambitious of distinction in some way should adopt an easy method of rendering themselves remarkable.

But is it not a mistake to affect in things indifferent what duty may require in things essential? Christians must be singular in many points. They must be singular in their estimate of this world and the next, singular in their abstinence from what is unlawful, singular in their respect for the divine commands, singular in their value for spiritual enjoyment. But need they be singular beyond what truth and soberness require? Eccentricity may indeed raise a sensation; it may provoke inquiry in the multitude; but it will deter the sober, and alarm the considerate; and originate, in persons of judgment, a doubt as to the soundness and stability of those who affect it. And whilst a conscientious difference on important points will be generally treated with respect, and may even lead others to a more mature examination of the subjects at issue; eccentricity, in minor matters, will probably only

excite their prejudice, or call forth their pity, or provoke their ridicule.

It is of the more importance that women should guard against mistakes of this nature; since, partly from the increased interest evinced by them on religious subjects, and partly from the change that has taken place in their pursuits and habits, they now hold a higher place in religious society than they ever yet did. Men, not unfrequently, defer to their judgment, because they feel the importance of their suffrage. Women have, in fact, considerable influence upon public opinion in every thing. They draw out, compare, and publish the sentiments of others; and frequently add their own commentary besides.

Nor is the station which they enjoy in religious society undeserved. They *have* materially aided the cause of piety, and they may aid it still more; and many there are who, by their good sense, their Christian graces, and their genuine piety, merit all the deference which they receive. They are real blessings in the circle in which they move, and they bear this certain criterion, that, with whatever respect they may be treated, they are ever unconscious of their own claims.

Others there are who are not backward in profession, but whose influence is exerted in a very different way. Their religion is all impulse; they are anxious to be themselves of importance, and therefore they cannot be content with the quiet

routine of ordinary female duties. They wander from house to house, retailing the spiritual errors of the day, feeling the religious pulse, dispensing prescriptions, and giving notoriety, at least, to every new nostrum which would impose on the credulity of weak and wayward Christians. And if they are but ill received by the vigorous and healthy, they are yet too acceptable to the valetudinarian; and, going about with their little casket of specifics, they excite and foster the diseases they affect to cure.

The enthusiasm which thus spends itself is, at least, very questionable. It blazes, indeed, and dazzles for a while, but it is not the steady flame which is kindled in the sanctuary. Sometimes it is only an apology for piety, mere secular excitement, romance, or vanity, or caprice; and sometimes it is the defect which accompanies and deforms religion, the weed which springs up with and often overgrows it; which is mistaken for, and cherished as, the genuine plant; and whose precociousness is encouraged as a sign of spiritual maturity.

But very different is it in its produce. It bears not the rose of Sharon, but the apple of discord; not clusters of the celestial vine, but spurious berries, which have the form, but not the sweetness, of the genuine fruit.

The visionary should not be identified with the sober-minded believer, the real lover of evangelical truth with the disciple of fanaticism; and the faults of the one should not be imputed to the other. It

is on account of the harm that the latter do to true piety that Christians are so much concerned for their mistakes.

For the irreligious must not suppose that because pious persons lament, and even censure the extravagance of zealots, they are therefore disposed to make common cause with the enemies of truth. On the contrary, it is their very zeal for true religion that renders them jealous for its sake, that leads them to regret the counterfeit, and to disown the caricature.

How sad is it when those who ought themselves to exemplify the spirit of the Gospel, and to show the genuine result of its principles, exhibit, on the contrary, an impatience of wholesome instruction, and a restlessness of appetite, which is ever needing some stimulus to excite its morbid taste. They are then ready to welcome every new and erroneous doctrine. They will hunt it out from obscurity, they will pursue it to the remote conventicle, and, for its sake, they will leave the guide of their former selection to follow some unknown teacher, some untaught and bold adventurer, to whom they ascribe gifts little short of inspiration, and an almost exclusive knowledge of divine truth.

These persons are, indeed, very far from right. They may have mistaken the way from the very first; they may have confounded error with truth, and fanaticism with piety. Or, if they once were in a healthy state, they have contracted disease. Theirs is a slow fever which preys upon the vitals of true

religion; and the best that we can hope for them is, that they may recover from their malady. For their meagre system is not the Gospel, their rapturous effusions are not the breathings of the Divine Spirit, their circumscribed clan is not the one true and catholic church. They have wandered altogether from the right fold, and it is the voice of truth alone that can bring them back.

Pity it is that the symmetrical form of true religion should be ever obscured by the misshapen image of fanaticism, and that the prominence assumed by the latter should conceal her prefect features. But it is no wonder that it should be so; for fanaticism is ever bold, and courts display. She walks unveiled, she tells her tale in the street, she runs to rich and poor, to learned and unlearned, proselytizing some, alarming others, and raising at least, the cry of party, either for or against herself.

How different is the quiet step and modest mien of true religion. She does not strive nor cry; but, like her Divine Author, when he walked on earth, she shuns the crowd of idle gazers, and stops the garrulous mouth of fame. Few speak of her, few know her; she is found in the retired village, or in the humble shed, in the private circle, or in the solitary chamber. She is the guide and friend of her who, with a single eye and simple heart, fixes her regard on heaven and her affections upon God.

And religion will bless those who thus submit to her influence. She will bestow on them a peace

which the world can never give. She will counsel them in every emergency, and guide them in that direct course which is better than all the crooked turns of worldly policy. She will so elevate them above the turmoils of life, that, whilst duty involves them in its occupations, they will not be harassed or enslaved by them; and she will impart to their character such dignity, that, though in some circles they may suffer reproach or ridicule for its sake, they will be, even there, secretly respected; they will be consulted in difficulty and sought for in distress; and their presence will be welcomed when the friendship of this world can afford no relief.

Such is the influence of the religious woman; and it will ever be exerted in a right cause. Religion will be loved and respected in her; and though she will be diffident of her own powers, and retiring in her habits, she will not want opportunity or means of usefulness. In the prosecution of her quiet and unobtruding course she may often find occasion to benefit others, to counsel the weak, or to persuade the wavering, to strengthen the unstable, or to bring the wanderer home.

CHAPTER VIII.

FEMALE DEFECTS.

A LOW estimate of female pretensions is certainly not the fault of the present day. Women are, perhaps, sometimes in danger of being spoilt; but they cannot complain that they are little valued. On the contrary, their powers are often too highly rated. Their natural defects are overlooked; and the consideration in which they are held, the influence they possess, and the confidence placed in their judgment, are in some instances disproportionate with their true claims.

This, perhaps, is the cause of their occasionally aspiring to situations, and intruding upon offices, for which they are not fitted. They are betrayed into an overweening conceit of their own powers, and are not unwilling to put them to the proof. And the indulgence with which their efforts are in general treated prevents their consciousness of failure, even when they are unsuccessful. A woman may obtain distinction for attempts which would be little to the credit of any but a female candidate; and her sex is at once a recommendation and an apology.

It is, indeed, fair that she should be spared the severity of criticism; but she should not presume

upon indulgence. Nature has assigned her a subordinate place, as well as subordinate powers; and it is far better that she should feel this, and should not arrogate the superiority of the other sex, whilst she claims the privileges of her own.

The character of woman, though inferior, is not less interesting than that of man. On the contrary, her very defects render her an object of solicitude; and if they disqualify her for some situations, they help to point out those for which she is really fitted.

But she should endeavor, as much as possible, to overcome her faults; and for this purpose should consider both their causes and their consequences. It is by knowing where we are liable to err, and the evils which our errors will entail upon us, that we shall be most likely to correct and avoid what is wrong.

The faults of women are almost always attributable to weakness. Vanity, for instance, is a weakness; and vanity is a fault to which women are very liable. It is a weakness of judgment and of mind. A woman is often vain because she cannot appreciate true excellence; vain of petty triumphs, because she cannot estimate greater; vain of fashionable distinction, because she cannot comprehend intellectual superiority; vain of a little talent, or a little accomplishment, because she cannot even taste higher proficiency. And this vanity is increased by, and identified with, her love of approbation. The wish of being admired seems born with her, and is de-

veloped as soon as she begins to act. The little peri, who, with infantile coquetry, flutters her fan, or threads the gallopade at the baby ball, only displays the embryo of that sentiment which, perhaps, in after-life, becomes her ruling passion. For, unless it be counteracted by a better principle, vanity is sure to take possession of the heart. It is in woman what ambition is in man: it may be a less dangerous, but it is a meaner foible; and it is a form of self-love equally jealous and equally insatiate.

The fashionable woman is generally vain. Though she may possess neither beauty nor wit, yet she is vain; vain of her place in the aristocracy of fashion; vain of being one of the circle of exclusives; vain of that modish celebrity which is so eagerly sought after by every candidate for the honors of ton. Vanity is very evident in all she does or says. She may not detail her conquests, or boast of the admiration she receives. She may not weary her less distinguished associates by talking of her titled acquaintance, or blush to speak to a country cousin. She is too proud, and too well bred, to be guilty of such mistakes. But still she is vain; vain even in her good humor; vain in her condescension; vain in her tirade of fashionable gossip; vain in her ignorance of every thing else. The frigid welcome she bestows on the uninitiated, the stare with which she checks an inconvenient acquaintance, are as indicative of vanity as the coquetry she displays at

Almack's, or the care with which she arranges her coiffure for a drawing-room.

Vanity seems with her almost an allowed foible. The man of the world understands it, and takes advantage of it; and it is the source of much of the vice and misery which deform high life.

And no wonder; for the more vanity is indulged the more uncontrollable it becomes. When it cannot be gratified it is restless and uneasy. No creature, for instance, is more unhappy than an ex belle. To what expedients does she not resort to prolong her reign, or, at least, to make it believed that she is not yet gone by. And when she does vanish like a falling star, and there is no trace left of her glittering path, vanity still remains, but only to torment her. It drives her into the slough of envy or the quicksands of *ennui*. It degenerates into hypochondriasis or vents itself in ill humor.

For such feelings the only corrective is religious principle. For it is this which will elevate a woman above the vanity and disappointment of the world, that will give her new interests and new hopes, and cause her to exchange the fatiguing and heartless amusements, which she once deemed essential, for real contentment and lasting peace. What a pity, then, that she should not apply to this her only remedy, seek in it the solace that she needs, and become, through its transforming influence, at once useful and happy.

But vanity is by no means confined to fashionable

life; even cultivated minds are not exempt from it; and though the Blue Stocking Club exists no longer, women are not proof against the vanity of letters. They have, indeed, in general, but little cause to be vain on this head, but it is because they have so little that they are so. The reputation of being a clever woman is easily obtained. Less than a schoolboy's learning is sufficient to confer it: Minerva's pretty votaress lisps a page of Virgil, spells an ode of Pindar, and is thought a prodigy of learning.

It is not, indeed, those who know most who are the most accessible to vanity. On the contrary, the really well-informed woman feels the folly of pretension, and shows her good sense by her humility. But the wish of being remarkable in some way is a temptation to many to diverge from their sphere, and court distinction even at the price of ridicule or censure. The *bas bleu* is eager for notoriety, and avails herself of her acquirements only to secure it. She does all she can to sustain her claims; she accumulates around her the materials of learning, and her very boudoir breathes an academic air. Its decorations are sufficient to proclaim her character; its shelves are filled with books of every tongue; its tables are strewed with the apparatus of science; the casket of jewels is displaced for the cabinet of stones; and the hammer and the alembic occupy the stand allotted for the work-box. One niche glooms with a quartered skull; another is enriched by a

classic statue; the easel stands in the back-ground, and the harp is admitted to complete the picturesque. And she herself is in accordance with all this paraphernalia; and her conversation, dress, and manner, equally attest ner eagerness to make good her pretensions to literary notoriety.

Now this is only another form of vanity. And a literary mania is by no means the refuge of the old and ugly; it is often indulged from the mere wish of being eccentric, and of attracting more than ordinary notice. To be the talk of a country town, and still more to be the wit of a season, is to some the object of their ambition. And then, there are the pleasures of patronage. How delightful to be the female Mæcenas, to bestow on one poor author the sanction of your name, and on another the comfort of a dinner; to open your house to the literati; to take by the hand the half-fledged poet and the incipient artist; to draw to your *conversazione* the Spanish patriot and the refugee royalist, the unturbaned Sultan and the wandering Greek; to be honored by a passing visit from the Lord Chancellor, or a salutation from the Great Unknown, or an excuse from the Poet-laureate: in short, to be the rendezvous of every wonder worth seeing, or not worth seeing, in the literary world.

No doubt such distinction is very tempting, and especially so when it may be gained at so little cost. For it is quite different with women and with the other sex. Many a weary step must a man take to

gain the laurel; and often is his meed withholden, even when fairly earned. But the female *bel esprit* flutters from one fancy to another; writes a sonnet, skims a periodical, deciphers an alphabet, divides a crystal, glitters in an annual; and the crown of Corinne is, by acclamation, placed upon her brow.

Yet she is often very troublesome when thus adorned. One friend must contribute to her album, another to her *hortus siccus*. One must submit to a craniological scrutiny, another must inhale a new gas. She enters society ready primed, and woe to him who pulls the trigger. He is whirled from the Hellespont to the Polar Sea, from the Giaour to the Iliad; he must have scaled Vesuvius, and dived into Pompeii; he must calculate the date of an antediluvian bone, and trace the zoology of a fossil tooth; he must unravel Dante, and know Petrarch by heart.

But, notwithstanding all this, the *bel esprit* is courted; for there is an *éclat* about her which is reflected on those whom she persecutes with her attentions. She is courted by the candidate for fame, indulged by the man of letters, and hated by her own sex. This hatred, indeed, she considers a tribute to her superiority; and her foible is the less likely to be corrected, because, when it is not encouraged by others, it is abundantly supplied from her own self-conceit.

The prevalence of this defect in woman is much to be regretted. It spoils many otherwise amiable characters, and exposes them to the censure, and

even contempt, of those by whom they ought to be respected. But, however we may lament its influence in matters merely connected with this world, it is still more injurious when it mixes with and pollutes religious sentiment. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel; and Christians ought, therefore, at once to reject its poison. Yet it is with difficulty expelled. It often lurks in ambuscade; and when we think we have wholly overcome it, it has, in fact, effected a compromise.

When religion is in fashion the more frequent is the alloy as well as the counterfeit; for a profession of piety may be assumed from the mere desire for human approbation; and it may not be always easy to detect the impure motive.

Nor is it surprising that, accessible as woman is to vanity, it should sometimes mix in her holier duties; especially as, it must be confessed, the present tone of Christian society is calculated to encourage it. The young and beautiful woman, for instance, who may have led the van in the career of fashion, feels at length the vanity and disappointment of her former course, and flies to religion as a refuge. And so far all is well. She has found the pearl of great price—let her prove its value. But let her prove it, for a while, at least, in the seclusion of her own home, in the solitude of her own chamber, and in the quiet exercise of those domestic duties which she may have, for long, forgotten and neglected. She may thus be established in her better choice;

may be grounded in truths of which she has hitherto known but little; may be strengthened against error, and be prepared to let her light shine before others. And she will probably, too, thus imbibe a taste for retirement, and a love of home, which is a far more Christian-like sentiment, and a better symptom of spiritual progress, than a wish for publicity and a desire of excitement.

But no. Her partial though scarcely judicious friends will not suffer her to be at peace. They allow her no probation: they cannot permit her to remain, even for a short time, unknown or unnoticed. The situation she held in the gay she is immediately solicited to fill in the religious world; and she finds herself there, more than ever, caressed and courted. She is urged to be the patroness of charities, to take the first seat in religious parties; she is appealed to, as an oracle, when she is barely a novice; and persuaded to become a controversialist before she is instructed in the elements of her faith. Her casting vote determines the popularity of a preacher; her carriage gives tone to a religious assembly; her name recommends an institution; her opinion stamps a book. She is the wonder of the day; is pointed at, quoted, panegyrized; and if no open flattery meets her ear, if her personal attractions have ceased to be complimented, the homage she receives is only more intellectual and refined. Not that her former charms have altogether lost their effect; for it cannot be denied that agreeable fea-

tures and an elegant manner have their weight in every society. Simplicity, too, may be more becoming than ornament; and beauty seldom loses any thing by Madonna tresses and a sombre robe.

Often, alas! may such a one thus become the mere idol of party; often may vanity only change its form, and send forth new shoots, when it is thought to be eradicated. For what but vanity leads some seemingly pious women to draw around them an exclusive côterie; to withhold the hand of fellowship from all who do not belong to their own sect; and to treat with strangeness, and even with neglect, the experienced and sober-minded Christian? And what but vanity leads to the frequent intrusion of women at the present day into new and untried offices? Must we not suspect that where there is so much assumption there must be self-conceit; and that, when publicity is so much courted, there must be some eagerness for display? And though we may not question the sincerity of zeal at once so energetic and so self-denying, yet must we not lament its misdirection and condemn its officiousness? There might, surely, be equal energy and less eccentricity, equal spirituality and more decorum.

Why should not, for instance, the female preacher confine her exhortations to the cottage, and, when she does deliver them, close the doors? Why should she convert her school-room into a conventicle, and, by the novelty of her exhibition, entice from more regular service? Is it that the author-

ized ministry is not enough? or that she imagines herself better qualified to teach? Is it that apostolic order is obsolete? or that female gifts are reserved for these privileged days? It may be that her manner is feminine and her voice melodious, that her doctrine is sound and her preaching effective. It may be even that she does good, that she excites attention, and that those whom piety would not bring to the church curiosity will lead to her meeting. But might she not do good more quietly? Could she not do good without the admixture of what is questionable? Could she not do good without infringing order, offending propriety, exciting discussion—without giving rise to censure on the one hand, or encouraging, perhaps, rash and unsuccessful attempts on the other? Could she not do good and be strictly feminine?

Who can doubt that vanity is the root of insubordination and the hotbed of fanaticism? It is vanity that makes women set up to be teachers when they are mere sciolists. It is vanity that makes them despise instruction and trust to intuition,—that even leads them at times to mistake the ravings of a heated brain for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And, if we may trace to other sources the aberrations of the present day,—if the imagination, whose excursiveness is pampered, becomes at length uncontrollable, if the love of novelty is abroad, and every thing old is prejudged and precondemned,—still to vanity must we, in part at least, ascribe the melancholy defections

of some who gave promise of better fruit. To it we must attribute the unhallowed schisms, the unscriptural heresies, the unauthorized pretensions, in which women take so prominent a part, and by which they give so much occasion of offence. They are puffed up by self-conceit, they mistake the impulses of enthusiasm for revelations from Heaven, and forget that, while humility is the accompaniment of true piety, order is the unvarying characteristic of the operations of the Spirit of God.

The more the effects of vanity are to be lamented, the more incumbent is it on Christians to check its growth. Yet this is scarcely remembered when the poor girl is taken from her spindle and her cottage to pray and to expound in public, or when those of higher grade are enticed from their domestic and quiet duties by the glare and excitement of religious exhibitions.

Neither is it remembered when the woman of rank is received with a deference almost approaching to idolatry,—when her every look and word are treasured up and repeated, when she is encouraged to pronounce upon characters and doctrine, to detail in the evening assembly her morning achievements, or enlarge in the class-room on the experience of her closet,—when she may make her strictures on others a plea for speaking of her efforts on their behalf, and indulge in censoriousness and egotism under the cloak of spiritual earnestness.

Vanity is in such cases the canker of religion; it

gnaws like a worm at the root; and when we look for the harvest the fruit is dust and bitterness.

How anxiously should we therefore watch its inroads. How carefully should we draw the fence around our own hearts. How especially should they by whom it has been long indulged guard against its revival. For nothing is so dangerous as an old enemy under a new name; and religious vanity is both more offensive and more insidious than any other. It is on this account that quietness is so desirable. It is not the going round a circle of religious acquaintance, or the hurrying from one religious meeting to another, the discussing with one the popular preacher and with another the popular heresy, the bandying of religion from mouth to mouth, that can promote its internal growth, or evidence its genuineness. Nor even is an indefatigable attendance upon congregational services, nor an unwearied assiduity in public benevolence, a sure criterion of our spiritual state.

Privacy tries the *sincerity* of our religion. In society is its *strength* proved. But it is when the flame of private devotion burns without adventitious excitement that we may trace its origin to Heaven. And it will re-ascend there. It will shine more and more unto the perfect day. It will mount to the throne of God, and unite itself to its parent fountain.

Vanity is very selfish: it leads us to seek self in every thing; and therefore, in proportion as it is indulged, kindness and amiability disappear. No-

thing, then, is a greater blemish in female character; for we love disinterestedness in woman,—we love to find in her warmth of heart and tender sympathy. And when, on the contrary, she is anxious only to distinguish herself, to gain notoriety by some means,—to be very brilliant, or very intellectual, or very religious, merely because such is the fashion of the day,—we cannot but turn from her with disappointment, and feel that, however precious the gem may be in regard to quality, there is a flaw in it which renders it worthless.

Vanity is the germ of party spirit. It is this which it would substitute for true piety; for while the latter recoils from it, vanity and party spirit go hand in hand. Flattery is the coin in which partisans pay their proselytes; and the vain person is not proof against its corruption. It entices silly women, and sends them out to parade with party colors, and in the mean while betrays them to the enemy at home.

It is painful to note human inconsistency. And, perhaps, it is in nothing more evident than in the occasional association of vanity with superior endowment. We see it disfiguring genius and obscuring religion; but it is a weakness in relation to which example should furnish not an apology, but a warning. For it sometimes so tarnishes excellence that we fail to recognise the intrinsic value of the latter, and, overlooking the beauty, are struck only by the blemish.

CHAPTER IX.

FEMALE DEFECTS.

The fickleness of woman is proverbial. Yet the reproach, in its usual acceptation, is, in a great measure, undeserved; for she is capable of long and steady attachment, and inconstancy is chargeable rather on the other sex.

But though the heart is not in fault, the head, perhaps, is; and to inconstancy of opinion, though not of affection, women are, it is to be feared, somewhat liable.

This proceeds, in great measure, from inconsiderateness. They are apt to imbibe opinions rashly, and to abandon them precipitately; and they are ever ready to hear and to adopt whatever has the charm of novelty.

The love of what is new is, indeed, natural to the sex. In many of their pursuits or pleasures novelty is the attraction. A new dress, or a new song, is each, in its way, thought very delightful. On the contrary, nothing is so ennuyant as sameness. This is especially felt by the woman of the world. Monotony is, above every thing, the object of her dread. The same faces weary her—beauty wearies her; and she often flies from the country for no better

reason than because she is tired of flowers and green fields, and the unvaried dulness of the family circle. Modern ingenuity must therefore be exhausted to captivate her fancy. The town is a magazine of novelties; and the artist, as well as milliner, must supply the demand.

Unhappily, the same weakness is sometimes indulged in more serious matters. The appetite is still greedy, though the food is different; and the spiritual novelty is welcomed with the same avidity as once was the worldly bauble. Women, indeed, love portents in every thing. A wonder, whatever it be, excites their interest; and extravagance seems, with some, almost a recommendation.

Religious persons, however, should be especially on their guard against this foible; lest their religion be identified with caprice, and be thought nothing more than a paroxysm of devotion, which will subside like any other fit.

It is sterling principle alone which imparts stability, and which gives truth for a foundation and a guide; and she who is possessed of it may be depended on alike in all relations and circumstances. Her religion is no wayward fancy, no day-dream, no precocious and sickly plant, that springs up in a night and withers in an hour. Its growth is sure and steady, though it may be slow; its roots are deep; and it will, in time, reach to Heaven.

There is a contrariety observable in the female mind, for which allowance is not always made, and

on which account the comparative estimate of the sexes is sometimes incorrect. Women have so much aptitude of talent, they can learn so many things, and are so dexterous in applying their knowledge, that their intellectual gifts are by some overrated, and regarded as on a level with those of the other sex. But strength and weakness are often sadly blended in the same individual; and high attainments are found to be, in many women, quite compatible with an unsound judgment. We are startled at the incongruity, and are surprised to see so much weakness combined with so much acquirement; to meet with a woman, for instance, who can talk Greek, without being able to act common sense. But the solution is not difficult.

Want of judgment is, indeed, one of the most common defects in female character; and it is in discernment, rather than in capacity, that the inferiority of woman consists. She chose wrong at first, and liability to error seems entailed upon her. We see this repeatedly exemplified. It is where judgment is required that she is most apt to fail. And it is this, in part, which renders her so susceptible of religious error. All of us are apt to identify theoretical knowledge with spiritual discernment; yet it is very possible to talk well upon religion, to quote Scripture, to have a text for every occasion, to read the religious miscellany and the religious controversy of the day, and yet be very ill grounded in divine truth. It is very possible to obtain credit for much

piety, and yet to go wrong on the very points on which our judgment is least mistrusted. And it is in this way that some apparently conscientious persons not unfrequently mistake. They have in religion, as in other subjects, just that ready knowledge which is always producible, and which leads them to imagine themselves proficients in theology, and to obtain credit for being so, when, in fact, they are mere babes in spiritual experience.

It is a refreshment when we do meet with those —and many such there doubtless are—who are free from all these faults. Such persons are not unconscious of their natural inferiority or of their individual defects; but they labor to remove the one and to correct the other. They have disciplined the mind in early youth; they have gathered experience from the trials of life; and they afford a beautiful instance of steadiness and discretion.

There have been examples of female excellence in every thing. We have heard of the heroine, and of the female martyr; of the woman of letters, and of the poetess. We are instructed by the recollection of Cornelia and Blandina,* of the maids of Orleans and Saragossa; and the legend of Sappho derives credit from our living reminiscences of Baillie, Hemans, and De Staël. But though these are instances of female superiority, greatness is not

* A blessed martyr, who, after having seen her brother, a youth of fifteen, expire in torture, was herself exposed to wild beasts.—See Milner, vol. i. chap. vi.

the characteristic of the sex. On the contrary, it is to be feared that littleness of mind is rather their peculiarity; and it is one which the habits of many women do not tend to correct. They are busied about little things, vexed by little cares, anxious about little occurrences. Some, indeed, unhappily, seem to live but for trifles. Theirs is a youth of dress, an old age of cards and gossip. The only effort they make in the way of duty is to order dinner, and in the way of occupation to work a flower or read a novel. And when a becoming headdress or an agreeable partner have ceased to be matters of interest, they fly to tittle-tattle, as to their only refuge from dulness.

Gossip of all kinds is, however, equally idle and frivolous. Whether it be the scandal of a country town or of the great world, it is equally idle and equally wrong; and it is a disgrace to the gentler sex that they are so universally charged with the propensity. Not but that the stigma is both too generally and too exclusively applied; for there are many women who do not by any means deserve it, and there are many men who do. And if the majority still be on the side of female delinquents, we must make some allowance for their contracted sphere and their want of important occupation. True, every woman may find plenty to do, and every woman may do good, and employment is the best prescription for a restless tongue. But education and habit are generally in fault. There are many who are by no means disinclined from useful

effort, but who do not know how to commence it; and who, if they are now little better than tattlers or busy bodies, might have been earlier led to devote their time to improving occupation and active duty.

Religious gossip is quite as bad as any other. It can be by no means edifying to be perpetually discussing the spiritual state of others and giving our opinion on their progress. We can scarcely indulge in any such comments without being in some degree censorious; and it would always do us much more good quietly to examine our own hearts than to interfere with the conduct or consciences of those around us.

Yet this is a propensity in which, it must be allowed, we are all occasionally apt to indulge; and if some are intolerant to every departure from their standard of duty, others are equally tenacious of what they imagine to be decorum. They are the first to note indiscretions of every kind; to surmise what is wrong and predict what is unhappy. They are the Cassandras of society; and if their conversation is ever liked, it is a justification of the remark, that there is something not disagreeable in hearing of the misfortunes of our best friends.

There are, however, comparatively few women who deserve such a reproach. Even those who are too fond of discussing their neighbors indulge their propensity, in general, with no ill intent. They do so, often, from the mere love of talking, and because,

when they have exhausted the weather and the fashions, they are somewhat at a loss for subjects of conversation.

But women should endeavor to raise their minds above the trifles which too often engross them. They should consider that intellectual elevation is the great end of attainment; for it is not the being a little more accomplished than their grandmothers that will impart to them real superiority. They may multiply acquirements, and yet be no wiser than if their only book had been the Spectator, and their only study the science of confections.

The great end of knowledge is to learn to think; and of this women are quite capable. They are capable of moral and intellectual efforts; and the more they improve their mental faculties, the more useful will they be, and the higher will they rise in the social scale.

And they will, too, be less liable to go wrong; for they will have that within them which will be a corrective to their faults and a stimulus to their virtues.

Such women, though they may have their share of trial, will bear up against misfortune, and will animate and bless others. And their religion will be so sound and genuine, that it will be their refuge in every distress,—the spring of their comfort and the ground of their hope; it will be liable neither to decline nor change, but will prove a never-failing source of comfort in all the vicissitudes of life.

CHAPTER X.

ON FEMALE ROMANCE.

Most women are inclined to be romantic. This tendency is not confined to the young or to the beautiful, to the intellectual or to the refined. Every woman capable of strong feeling is susceptible of romance; and though its degree may depend on external circumstances, or education, or station, or excitement, it generally exists, and requires only a stimulus for its development.

Romance,* indeed, contributes much to the charm of female character. Without some degree of it no woman can be interesting; and though its excess is a weakness, and one which receives but little indulgence, there is nothing truly generous or disinterested which does not imply its existence. It is that poetry of sentiment which imparts to character or incident something of the beautiful or the sublime; which elevates us to a higher sphere; which gives an ardor to affection, a life to thought, a glow to imagination; and which lends so warm and sunny a hue to the portraiture of life, that it ceases to

* This term has been objected to by an authority to which the writer would respectfully defer; but she trusts that the context will sufficiently explain her meaning.

appear the vulgar, and cold, and dull, and monotonous reality which common sense alone would make it.

But it is this opposition between romance and sobriety that excites so strong a prejudice against the former. It is associated in the minds of many with folly alone. A romantic, silly girl is the object of their contempt; and they so recoil from this personification of sentiment, that their chief object seems to be to divest themselves altogether of its delusion. Life is to them a mere calculation; expediency is their maxim, propriety their rule, profit, ease, or comfort their aim; and they have at least this advantage, that while minds of higher tone, and hearts of superior sensibility, are often harassed and wounded, and even withered, in their passage through life; they proceed in their less adventurous career, neither chilled by the coldness, nor sickened by the meanness, nor disappointed by the selfishness, of the world. They virtually admit, though they often theoretically deny, the baseness of human nature; and, strangers to disinterestedness themselves, they do not expect to meet with it in others. They are content with a low degree of enjoyment, and are thus exempted from much poignant suffering; and it is only when the casualties of life interfere with their individual ease that we can perceive that they are not altogether insensible.

A good deal of this phlegmatic disposition exists in many who are capable of higher feeling. Such

persons are so afraid of sensibility, that they repress in themselves every thing that savors of it; and though we may occasionally detect it in the mounting flush, or in the glistening tear, or in the half-stifled sigh, it is in vain that we endeavor to elicit any more explicit avowal. They are ashamed even of what they do betray; and one would imagine that the imputation of sensibility were almost a reflection on their character. They must not feel, or, at least, they must not allow that they feel; for feeling has led so many persons wrong that decorum can be preserved, they think, only by indifference. And they end in becoming really as callous as they wish to appear, and stifle emotion so successfully that at length it ceases to give them uneasiness.

Such is often the case with many who pass through life with great decorum; and though women have naturally more sensibility than the other sex, they too sometimes consider its indulgence altogether wrong. Yet, if its excess is foolish, it is surely a mistake to attempt to suppress it altogether; for such attempt will either produce a dangerous revulsion, or, if successful, will spoil the character. One would rather, almost, that a woman were ever so romantic, than that she always thought, and felt, and spoke by rule; and should deem it preferable that her sensibility brought upon her occasional distress, than that she always calculated the degree of her feeling.

Life has its romance, and to this it owes much

of its charm. It is not that every woman is a heroine, and every individual history a novel; but there are scenes and incidents in real life so peculiar, and often so poetic, that we need not be indebted to fiction for the development of romance. Christians will trace such scenes and incidents immediately to Providence, and they do so with affectionate and confiding hearts; and the more affecting or remarkable these may be, the more clearly do they recognise the divine interference. They regard them as remembrances of Heaven, to recall to them their connection with it, and remind them, that whatever there may be to interest or excite their feelings here, there is infinitely more to affect and warm their hearts in the glorious prospects beyond.

It is natural that women should be very susceptible to such impressions; that they should view life with almost a poetic eye; and that they should be peculiarly sensitive to its vicissitudes. And though a Quixotic quest after adventures is as silly as it is vain, and to invest every trifle with importance, or to see something marvellous in every incident, is equally absurd; there is no reason why the imagination should not grasp whatever is picturesque, and the mind dwell upon whatever is impressive, and the heart warm with whatever is affecting in the changes and chances of our pilgrimage. There is, indeed, a great deal of what is low and mean in all that is connected with this world, quite enough to sully the most glowing picture; but let us some-

times view life with its golden tints, let us sometimes taste its ambrosial dews, let us sometimes breathe its more ethereal atmosphere; and let us do so, not as satisfied with any thing it can afford, not as entranced by any of its illusions, but as those who catch, even in this dull mirror, a shadowy delineation of a brighter world, and who pant for what is pure, celestial, and eternal. This is surely better than clipping the wings of imagination, or restraining the impulses of feeling, or reducing all our joys and sorrows to mere matters of calculation or of sense.

They are indeed to be pitied who err in the opposite extreme—whose happiness or misery is entirely ideal; but we have within us such a capacity for both independent of all outward circumstances, and such a power of extracting either from every circumstance, that it is surely more wise to discipline such a faculty than to disallow its influence.

Youth is, of course, the season for romance. Its buoyant spirit must soar, till weighed down by earthly care. It is in youth that the feelings are warm and the fancy fresh, and that there has been no blight to chill the one or to wither the other. And it is in youth that hope lends its cheering ray and love its genial influence; that our friends smile upon us, our companions do not cross us, and our parents are still at hand to cherish us in their bosoms, and sympathize in all our young and ardent feelings. It is then that the world seems so fair, and our fellow-

creatures so kind. that we charge with spleen any who would prepare us for disappointment, and accuse those of misanthropy who would warn our too confiding hearts. And though in maturer life we may smile at the romance of youth, and lament perhaps its aberrations, yet must we often regret the depth of our young emotions, the disinterestedness of our young affections, and that enthusiasm of purpose which, alas! we soon grow too wise to cherish.

Young women are peculiarly liable to enthusiasm of every kind. They are so gentle, so tender, so imaginative, and they have often so much leisure to indulge in reveries and ecstacies, that it is not to be wondered at that they should be occasionally somewhat visionary. Yet their extravagance has contributed more than any thing else to bring discredit upon sentiment. Its affectation often sickens more even than its folly. It is so distressing to see a young woman sighing, and weeping, and dreaming away her existence, one moment in a hysteric and another in a faint, always getting up a scene or supporting a part, that one is almost prepared to accede to any tirade against sentiment, the caricature of which is so truly absurd. Young women should be taught the folly of sentimentalism. They should be taught, that though it is a very right thing and a very serious thing to feel, it is a very wrong thing and a very silly thing to be languishing and affected. They should learn to look at life through a faithful medium; to see its long perspective in all its true

variety of light and shade, of what is beautiful and what is depressing. And if, even while they allow the preponderance to the latter, their eye will still seek out and linger on some few bright spots, and their young anticipations will scarcely submit to be sobered by any thing but by their own experience; they should, on this account especially, learn to stretch their view beyond this earthly prospect, and rest their sight upon a far distant land, where there is, indeed, every thing to transport and every thing to satisfy, where there are scenes too vivid for imagination to paint and pleasures too sublime for intellect to conceive.

The romance of youth is naturally associated with that of love; and it is the intimacy of their union, and the inconsequences which frequently result from the latter, that may in some degree account for the horror which certain persons entertain of sentiment. A romantic girl is concluded to be in love, or ready to become so. She is, in her own imagination, a lady of romance; and her sensibility is the cause of a thousand follies, if not of more serious aberrations. Love seems to her such a pleasing dream; it is identified with so many soft and sweet emotions, and associated with so many picturesque and pretty things,—with the interesting flutter and the speaking sigh, with music, and poetry, and moonlight, and a cottage,—that her foolish heart welcomes its very name, and she courts the tender passion, till she is, or affects to be, its victim. And no wonder,

then, that she cherishes it, be it ever so incongruous. Opposition is its nourishment, for it is her ambition to be a heroine; and though she might disdain her inamorato were he admitted to her mother's drawing-room, she will think him irresistible as she smiles on him from a garret, and will nurse and pamper her capricious and wayward fancy till it becomes a dangerous disease.

And even without such excess there is often a great deal that is foolish and sentimental in young women, which the modish coquetry and silly vanity of the world tend too much to encourage. To be the object of admiration and remark, to talk over in the morning côterie the flirtations of the evening assembly, or to be absorbed by a Platonic sentiment, may seem at the time very interesting and poetic. But these are often the beginnings of sorrow. If love has rendered many women very unhappy, and some very criminal; if that which may be the fountain of a woman's joy becomes to her too often only a source of misery; if, instead of leading a contented and useful life, she pines away in chagrin, or languishes in inertness, or becomes at once an object of pity and of blame; this is often attributable to the mere gratification of a paltry ambition, or to the indulgence of a morbid sentimentalism, which a little energy and a little common sense would soon have subdued. She has talked and mused herself into love, and has affected the symptoms, till they have really taken possession of her heart.

A little wholesome occupation is by far the best cure for this fantasy. It is the best remedy both for sickly fancies and for real grief. Persons even of superior intelligence and high religious feeling need and experience its efficacy in the latter; and for the hypochondriasis of love it is so infallible a specific that those who have not recourse to it are wilful suicides. Yet it is a better preventive even than it is a cure; and to keep the mind well exercised, and the body actively engaged, is an effectual antidote to the extravagances of sentiment or the ill effects of romantic passion.

Still, however silly sentimentalism may be, an attempt to reduce to cold calculation the warm affections of youth is very unwise, as well as, for the most part, very futile. The follies of romantic persons are often attributable to such treatment. It is precisely the girl who has been daily schooled in lessons of mere worldly prudence,—who has been told that love exists only in the reveries of poets, and that it is highly indecorous and wrong ever to entertain such a sentiment,—who will listen to the first fond tale, and will give away her heart to the first bold bidder, and who will fancy that there can be nothing so interesting and delightful as a descent on a rope ladder or a flight to the Tweed. Or if she is so credulous and so docile as to believe and follow her instructers, how certain are they to render her unhappy. They will lead her to take the most important step in life with the same indifference,

and for the same reasons, as she would accept a partner or conclude a bargain; and she will then have to experience all the bitterness, and be exposed to all the dangers, of a life without sympathy, and of a union without affection.

And why deprive life of its softest charm, and woman of her loveliest attraction? Is there any sentiment so sweet as that which unites those who virtuously and truly love; which identifies their hopes, their joys, their prospects; which inspires the weaker with affiance, the stronger with sympathy; which becomes more pure, more disinterested, more intense, the longer it is experienced; and which, looking beyond the narrow span of this earthly existence, longs for its renewal in a brighter world? And is there any thing which can compensate for the want of such a sentiment in woman? She may amuse, or dazzle, or look pretty; she may show off well in a drawing-room, and gratify for a while the vanity that selected her; but her brilliancy cannot compensate for her indifference; nor can *she* inspire an exalted sentiment who is herself incapable of feeling it. What but love can dictate the amenities so essential to domestic happiness,—can excuse mutual faults, can drive away dulness and give interest to duty, can lighten every burden and enliance every pleasure, can sweeten every thing bitter and render more grateful every thing sweet? Love is indeed the golden thread which imparts richness and value to the coarsest woof; and happier, far happier,

are they, who, with love in their hearts, encounter many a shock, and cope with many a struggle, than they who, soured by mutual disesteem, find even their luxurious indolence fatiguing, and their costly pleasures tasteless and disappointing.

It were well that young women should feel that affection is a thing too precious to be thrown away, and too serious to be trifled with. They may, and probably they will, love; and, if the object be worthy of their regard, the more deep and sincere the sentiment, the more likely is it to make them happy.

Such is indeed *their* due who are themselves in earnest; and minds and hearts of the finest tone will be the most jealous of any thing like coldness. Nor is it depth of sentiment which is to be apprehended; it is that fickle, shallow, perverse, and silly day-dream, which women miscall love, whose results are so pernicious, and whose effects on character are so undermining. There is nothing disinterested or elevating about it: it is often mere vanity—the *éclat* of an admirer, the excitement of a courtship, the matrimonial equipment, the bridal attendance, the privilege of precedence, or, as was once said by a young and gay *fiancée*, of having gloves and ribands to match.

There is a great deal of spurious sentiment in every thing; and the affectation or misapplication of feeling is far more prejudicial than its excess. Thus the sympathy which works of fiction excite, though it has in it something tender and romantic,

by no means involves real feeling. The young woman who is versed in romances will, no doubt, acquire the language of sentiment. She will have a sigh and a tear for every occasion, a languishing look and a nervous palpitation; she will condole with every tale of distress, and be exuberant, at least, in her professions of sympathy. She will even imagine it very pretty and picturesque to appear in a cottage, to drop a guinea on a poor man's table, and to receive with blushing modesty his lavish thanks. But when the effort is really to be made, when she finds that charity involves self-denial and exertion, that she must rise from her luxurious couch, and soil her silken sandals, and encounter perhaps rudeness and ingratitude from the objects of her relief, and that all this is to be done without observation or applause,—that there is no one to overhear her gentle voice, or to watch her gliding footsteps, or to trace her fairy form as she passes down the village street,—then her philanthropic ardor cools,—she shrinks from the painful duty, and discovers that what is very pleasing and poetic in description is very dull and irksome in practice. The very morbidness of her sensibility is a bar to the real exercise of benevolence; she cannot bear to look upon pain;—there is so much that is offensive in human misery and unromantic in its detail, there is so much that is appalling in scenes of misery, and sickness, and death, that she recoils from the mere observation of such calamities; and she shuts her

eyes and closes her ears to genuine distress, from the same feelings that cause her to scream at the approach of a spider or faint at the sight of blood.

Yet she delights to nurse imaginary griefs, to live in an ideal world, and so to pamper her fancy and excite her sensibility that they alone become to her prolific sources of unhappiness.

There is a romance in grief which is highly poetic. There is something sublime in the extremity of human woe. Who does not feel its pathos when he reads of Antigone or of Hecuba, of the daughter of Aiah or of the widow of Nain? Who does not feel it when he witnesses or experiences the too frequent tragedies of ordinary life?

Yet there is here also danger in the indulgence of sentiment. There may be a pride in the excess of grief. There may be a luxury in the exuberance of tears. There may be a dreamy trance, in which the sufferers find almost pleasure, and from which they will not descend. And thus they may shroud themselves in their grief, and discard every thing which would divert them from its contemplation, and indulge in a fond and sentimental reverie, which they may almost imagine it a desecration to disturb.

This is not unfrequently the case with women whose minds are sensitive but weak, and who seem to make a merit of giving way to sorrow. But it is a perversion of feeling, not its consequence. For that sentiment is in reality most intense that does

not indulge itself in expression, that grief most affecting that is not selfish, that emotion most noble and sublime that elevates, not to ecstasy, but to exertion,—that does not spend itself in weeping over a tomb or in wailing a coronach, but sends the mourner forth in modest, quiet, unobtrusive sorrow, to encounter again the trials of life, and to fulfil its obligations.

CHAPTER XI.

ON FEMALE ROMANCE.

THE sensitive mind discovers poetry every where. As it is touched with whatever is affecting in the chances of life, so does it taste whatever is picturesque in the objects of nature. All that is majestic and lovely here is to it a source of delight, and helps it to form a more just conception of him who is the Author of so much beauty. It is thus that in the images of earth may be recognised the tokens of eternity,—in the canopy of heaven and the expanse of the ocean, in the setting glories of the sun and the melting colors of the rainbow, visions and emblems of a brighter world.

And the emotions thus excited are very good for us. They are the dews that refreshen the heart and prepare it for spiritual culture. They are the voice of God speaking to us in his works, and demanding our affection and our service.

The mere affecters of sentiment have, however, no capacity for deep feeling. They may travel over the world to support their pretensions; may scale the Alpine range, and tread the Hesperian shore, and stand upon the ruins of the Capitol; but they feel no kindling of spirit, no soft and sad associa-

tions,—they have no object but to compose a journal or to embellish an album.

Thus it is sometimes with young women to whom the commonplaces of sentiment are familiar, who are fluent in expression and ready with their pencil, who affect pathos and study the picturesque. They have, perhaps, made a pilgrimage to St. Peter's, or a tour to the Lakes; they have sailed on the bay of Naples, or have sketched Windermere; they talk of nothing but "the eternal city," or of autumnal tints; and we are alternately wearied by their bad drawings and their worse taste.

Not, however, that their sentimentality is altogether affected. On the contrary, they often feel at the moment all that they express; and though their rhapsodies may be transient, they are genuine. Woman is naturally susceptible, and especially so when her imagination is excited, and when fancy as well as feeling is encouraged to expatiate in the region of romance. It is for this reason she is so susceptible of the charms of verse. Perhaps there are few young women who have not, at some time or other, invoked the muse, and who have not in their portfolios the fragments of an address to Phœbus or of an ode to Cynthia.

And it may be said that theirs is a harmless passion, and at least does not deserve our censure. But there is always danger in fictitious feeling. It is always to be apprehended, lest those devotees of song should poetize real life; lest the same exagge-

ration which converts a pond into a lake, and a shrubbery into a forest, should sometimes transform a gardener into an Orlando.

Nor does any thing bring sentiment so much into discredit as its caricature. It is easy to assume the eccentricities of genius, to affect abstraction, and to apostrophize the moon. But one would almost rather that a young woman had no poetical taste, than that she were always inditing sonnets or reciting Lord Byron.

We must not mistake affectation for taste in any thing. The one always leads to silliness and extravagance, the other teaches us to appreciate true beauty.

It is the same with fine arts as with poetry. Real enthusiasm in both generally leads to excellence; but the affectation of sentiment is the symptom of a weak mind. To be perpetually discussing Canova and Chantry, or referring to the Louvre or the Vatican, to be in ecstasies with every bit of broken marble, and to trace an original in every dirty picture, may amaze the ignorant and credulous, but is, in reality, very absurd. They who know most can least tolerate such pretension; and it is much to be regretted when young persons read, take lessons, and travel, not that they may acquire what is valuable or observe what is really important, but because it is fashionable to affect and display an interest in every subject of feeling and taste.

Besides, the danger is lest a similar extravagance

be evinced elsewhere, and lest an abuse or affectation of sentiment on all points be substituted for real feeling. Nothing, for instance, is more to be apprehended than such a mistake with regard to religion. The influence of romance, indeed, here is very dangerous. Not that we are to be insensible to the beauty of the Christian system, or that our perception of it should not mix with and heighten our devotional impressions; but the danger is lest we mistake our admiration of it for our reception of its truths, and a mere imaginative excitement for spiritual fervor.

Eloquence, poetry, even music, and the fine arts, may be appliances of religion; nor, though we ought to be jealous of their influence, is it necessary that we should exclude them. The poetry of Scripture, the eloquence and harmony of nature, our very constitution, prove that these are intended to be links in the chain which is to draw our hearts to heaven.

But, then, there is not unfrequently cause to suspect that it is the poetry, not the truth, of the Gospel of which the heart is enamored. It melts under an appeal, it is touched by the impassioned eloquence of the pleader; it yields not to his arguments, but to his persuasion. Could he have been equally pathetic on any other subject, he would have been equally successful.

Such impressions are generally transient. They evaporate in a few tears; and a compliment to the

sermon, and a complacent recollection of the sensibility it excited, are its sole result.

But there may be a more permanent, yet equally illusive, affection. Religious enthusiasm is often nothing more than religious romance. It is the consequence of some vivid impression on the fancy or the feeling, without a proportionate conviction of the understanding, or, at any rate, without an accurate knowledge of scriptural truth.

Sudden conversions are on this account suspicious; not because they are unlikely, but because they are too often unreal. If the fire from heaven has often shot like lightning through the soul, and at once purified and absorbed its affections; there has been, not unfrequently, a less ethereal spark, whose brilliancy has dazzled and misled them. And women are very prone to be thus deceived. They are suddenly struck with the poetry of religion, and yield to it at once a sentimental and enthusiastic homage. And there is so much apparent fervor in their piety that we cannot dare to think it unreal; there is so much tenderness and devotedness in their service that we scruple to question its sincerity.

Yet self-deception may be carried to a great extent. There is very much to excite in religion; there are the glowing imagery and the touching simplicity of Scripture, the pathetic story and the sublime purpose of the Gospel, its affecting development and awful catastrophe; and these things address themselves so powerfully to the imagination

and the heart, and, independently of spiritual influence, so affect them, that we can scarcely wonder that impressions thus excited should impose on many, because they bear all the appearance of being genuine. Yet they may be only the tribute which sensitive minds must pay to poetry every where; and their inadequacy proves that Christianity is something more than a mere matter of taste and feeling, and that it implies the operation of divine grace.

Even where this grace is accorded, there is still room for mistake. Christians may not clearly distinguish their own impressions; they may not discriminate between what is innate and what is implanted;—between a constitutional bias and an infused principle;—between natural sensibility and religious feeling. And they may thus be betrayed into a thousand errors.

Female romance finds ample room for indulgence in the religious visions of the present day. The mystic trance, the unknown tongue, the pretended miracle, as they are the creation, so are they the aliment, of enthusiasm. There is something so exciting in being transported beyond commonplace incidents, in being no longer fettered by physical possibilities, in being ourselves the expectants, if not the actual recipients, of extraordinary powers, that one can scarcely wonder at a credulity at once so flattering and so delightful. One almost scruples to disturb so delicious a reverie, and to bring down the Quietist from her ambrosial cloud; but that one

cannot but apprehend some danger from her flight. Perhaps, indeed, it might be better to let her rhapsodize undisturbed, for time must break the enchanted glass; and if, with the destruction of her visions, reason and religion resume their sway, she will be glad to return to the practice of known duty, and to substitute simple truth for subtle phantasies.

Enthusiasm is not unfrequently a mere animal fever, which is perpetually nursed by stimulants, when it ought to be allayed by sedatives. It is a wandering of mind, bordering on delirium, which exaggerates realities, and embodies shadows, and yet has a painful consciousness of its own aberrations. For the enthusiast has often her misgivings, which are, indeed, the best symptoms of her state. They are as lucid intervals which indicate returning reason. And happy will she be when her malady subsides; and when, instead of seeing visions, and hearing voices, and mistaking phantoms for celestial forms, she submits once more to the simplicity of Scripture, and walks once more quietly and humbly with her God.

There are female visionaries from whom one cannot but anticipate such a termination. They are so good and so sincere; their feelings are so tender, their hearts so affectionate, and their piety so warm; they have so sweet, and kind, and heavenly a spirit, that, though we must fear that they have erred very far from the truth, we cherish the persuasion that they will soon return. They deserve our esteem,

our love, and, as far as may be, our sympathy; and if, in spite of their gentleness, their creed is exclusive, and they scruple not to question the safety of those who in any degree differ from them; let it, on the other hand, be our care so to act, that, in whatever else they may think us deficient, they may learn from us a lesson of charity.

But let not their zeal or their amiability prevail with us to entertain their errors. It may, indeed, require some firmness to resist them; we may admire their piety and prize their good opinion; we may even feel that their appeal is not without power; but let us bring their doctrines to the test of Scripture, and if they will not stand this scrutiny let nothing prevail on us to entertain them.

We are safe only when truth is the object of our affections, and when we find in it satisfaction and delight. And surely it affords enough for the most ardent mind. Is there not in the Gospel every thing that is sublime? Is there not in God, as he is there revealed, every thing to engage our hearts?

Why then should we look for Him where He is not? He has walked in the form of man; He has spoken in the language of earth, and He now appeals to our human feelings, and asks our reasonable service.

Religion is, indeed, not a mere system. It is full of sentiment and love; a sentiment that calms, and a love that occupies the soul. And happy only is the woman who experiences these; who finds in the

assurance of the divine sympathy, and in her love to God, a cordial to her spirit, an anodyne to her griefs, and a stimulus to her hopes. Duty then loses all its irksomeness, for it is the tribute of love; and the Christian rejoices in a sense of that union which binds her, in grateful dependence, to the Giver of all good.

And as, though not insensible to present blessing, nor ungrateful for present refreshment, she feels the lurking thorn in every thing connected with earth, she therefore dwells with greater delight on the prospect of a happier world. She tastes whatever there is of God here, and looks for the full and perfect manifestation of him in his immediate presence.

CHAPTER XII.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

It is a good sign of the advance of society when attention is paid to the education of women. The youth of the other sex commonly monopolize all the care of a rude people, and the female child is left to acquire as she may the little menial arts, which are to be her perpetual and exclusive employment. And even when war and the chase have given place to intellectual pursuits, it is long before woman reaps the advantage. Her beauty is still considered her sole claim to regard, and her mind is thought incapable of culture, or not worth the pains.

The increased attention bestowed upon female improvement is a proof of the superiority of the modern to the ancient civilized world. We hear of one or two gifted women in Greece and Rome,—of Sappho, and of Aspasia, and of Porcia; but the generality were consigned to the distaff, and were never thought of in connection with any more elevated employment.

One might almost say, at present, that the error lies in the contrary extreme;—not that too much thought or pains can be bestowed on female education, but that too much is sometimes attempted in it, and too much expected from it. Education is

indeed very influential, but it cannot do every thing. It may mould, but it seldom transforms, character; it may call forth, but it cannot originate; it improves, but it does not create. In religion, the Christian knows that education can do nothing without a higher influence; and in ordinary matters, the accurate observer will confess that its operation will be much affected by constitutional tone and natural capacity.

However contrary to the theory of some, it is very evident that there is an innate moral and intellectual bias, which contributes greatly to the formation of individual character. It is in the mind as in the body; there is a peculiarity in each which no training can take away, which is observable, not only in those pre-eminently distinguished, but in all. For all have their peculiar aspect, as well as their general resemblance; and we need not be indebted to physiognomical or phrenological science for a truth which experience and observation sufficiently discover.

It is, perhaps, one of the faults of modern education, and especially of that of women, that this difference is sometimes overlooked. There are now a system and a routine, to which every girl must be subjected. A few years ago, this was by some extended even to bodily discipline; and we have heard of delicate females being sent out with their brothers with perforated shoes, that they might be inured to hardships, which they would probably in after-life never have to encounter.

The folly of such conduct was evident from its results: it was a mania that lasted only for a while, (till Emile was forgotten;) but it is easier to discern a physical than a moral error, and much easier, too, to correct it.

We may often see instances of a similar mistake in the intellectual treatment of young people of the present day, especially in matters of mere taste. Yet, in these, we must allow that nature is peculiarly arbitrary. There are some who can see no beauty in a Claude,—there are others who can hear unmoved the death-song of Weber; still music and painting are deemed so essential, that every young woman must handle a pencil or strike the harp. How many a poor girl is, in this way, doomed to symphonize three or four hours every day, to play without an ear, and to sing without a voice; and, after many years of irksome drudgery, to discover that her soul was not tuned to harmony, and that all her meritorious exertions cannot supply natural defects.

Music and drawing are very delightful, but they are surely not essential. A woman may be very good, very clever, very pleasing, without them; nay, much more pleasing than when she is, as it were, forced into their service, and made to affect a taste. For then there will be a perpetual display of some labored studio, or some double octave bravura, the only merit of which is its painful execution. And for a woman to play and draw only a little is equally

distressing to her friends and to herself; for they are constrained to admire, and she to execute, in spite of the consciousness of insincerity on the one hand, and of failure on the other.

The loss of time which these useless efforts involve is, perhaps, their least evil. To force the inclination in things indifferent has a bad moral effect. Constrained studies are seldom successful; and, frequently, the error is universal, and pervades the system. Certain things are to be acquired, certain rules observed, whatever be the ability, taste, or temper. Natural inferiority, instead of feeling itself assisted, is, not unfrequently, wholly discouraged by this unbending routine; and the innate and peculiar talent, if such there be, languishes for want of culture. Still more lamentable is the effect on disposition. How often is irritability the consequence of wounded sensitiveness, and how often does the severity which may be requisite to restrain the impetuous, freeze and paralyse the diffident and tender. Many a gentle spirit has been crushed, many a feeling heart chilled, many an amiable disposition rendered fretful and peevish, by a want of sympathy in instructers.

It would be far more wise to study the peculiarities of temper and talent, and to adapt our treatment accordingly. It is surely not desirable that the characters of all young women should be as uniform as is their handwriting; and it is as absurd to attempt universal conformity of mind as it is of mode.

To make no allowance for moral and intellectual difference is, indeed, a greater mistake than for a little woman to adopt a French coiffure, or a plain woman a conspicuous dress, merely in compliance with fashion.

On the other hand, how much may be effected by a tender and judicious treatment. How may the timid be encouraged, and the languid stimulated, and the latent spark of genius fanned. How may even the dull be roused to exertion, and be made to feel, at least, sympathy in what is refined and intellectual.

Adaptation is indeed the great secret in education; —adaptation to circumstances as well as to character, and, one might almost say, to inclination as well as to ability. For though there is a danger in over-indulgence in this respect, there is even more danger in over-restraint; and if the favorite exercise of the mind be not prejudicial, it is surely better to encourage and direct than to thwart it. It is as in the choice of a profession;—few rise to eminence whose wishes are counteracted,—so few attain proficiency in that to which they are strongly disinclined. And though this may be but an excuse for indolence, and, of course, must, in such cases, be overruled; it may, too, be an intuitive instinct, whose intimations, at least, merit attention. For as the appetite often points out what the stomach will bear, so the taste often indicates what the intellect will master.

The education of women should, of course, be strictly feminine. Yet this affects more the manner than the matter of instruction; for it is not so much what is taught, as the way in which it is taught, and the use made of it, that determines character. Knowledge, in itself, has no tendency to make a woman unfeminine, any more than it has to make a man proud; but it is the self-sufficiency which is sometimes instilled as its accompaniment which produces assumption and conceit in the one case, and arrogance in the other.

With regard, indeed, to instruction, it is very important that reason, as well as memory, should be brought into play. Every one is aware how often lessons are learnt merely by rote; and as an antidote to this, many useful class books have been added to our youthful libraries; but the principle that has given rise to these admits of a much wider application than we at first imagine. For instance, we put into our children's hands some of the popular compendiums, of the utility of which, both as aids and lures to attainment, so much is said; and we are presently surprised by their acquaintance with events and names, and are sometimes even made to blush at our own comparative ignorance; but all this may be effected, and yet the little learners may be no better than mere parrots. For Pinnock's books, and Gall's books, will never of themselves educate them, since broken catechisms may be acquired as mechanically as the less simple forms;

the onus of teaching must still rest with ourselves; and we shall be sadly disappointed in the result of any mode of instruction which does not call forth the reasoning faculties.

We do indeed but little if we do not induce our children to think, to compare, and to apply;—to draw religious and moral inferences;—and, in short, to extract from nature, from history, and from every thing they see, read, or experience, lessons which will guide their future conduct, and promote their everlasting welfare; and this especially with regard to girls. For by such intellectual discipline we shall best correct one great defect in female character; and shall make our daughters not only linguists, historians, naturalists, but THINKERS; capable of applying their minds to any subject, and of turning each to good account.

It is thus, too, that every acquirement may be made useful. Even accomplishment may be a means of strengthening the mind; for the sciences of music and drawing cannot be acquired without much thought; and the study of Crotch and Wood may be made as subservient to the intellectual improvement of our girls, as Aristotle and Euclid are to that of our boys.

All this only tends to prove the importance of perfect acquirement. Such acquirement does indeed demand time and application; but it has this good effect, that, while it satisfies and fixes the mind, it does not cheat it into a false estimate of its own

powers. On the contrary, superficial knowledge dazzles by the rapidity of its attainment, and, while it impresses us with a notion of our own superiority, leads us to despise those who have travelled by slower steps. It is thus that young women sometimes entertain an overweening idea of their own talents; they are, as the phrase is, well educated; that is, they have been taught a great many things; and they think to impress others with the same opinion of their proficiency with which they delude themselves.

It is indeed no wonder that young women should be so very clever now-a-days,—there are so many helps to learning and steps to Parnassus. There are so many pioneers to pave the way, that it is a libel any longer to call it steep. If grammar be dry and abstruse, its necessity is superseded;—if the dictionary be irksome, there is the interlined translation;—if the classic author be obscure and ponderous, there are the lucid paraphrase and the elegant abridgment. Be the nut ever so hard, the kernel is extracted. Our very babies may suck the sweets of Froissart, Robertson, and Hume, and follow with infantile curiosity the retreat of the Ten Thousand.

Youth is now such a very busy time. There are so many languages that must be learnt; so many accomplishments that must be mastered; so many sciences with which we must be familiar. A little while ago French was a rare acquirement; but what

girl now does not sigh with Filicaja or weep with Klopstock? The versatility of female talent is, indeed, abundantly improved. Master succeeds to master, and class to class. The day of the scholar, like that of the instructer, is parcelled out into hours; and the sixth portion of each, which is cribbed by the former to run to a new pupil, is not unfrequently all that is allowed to the latter to prepare for a new teacher.

It is well that mechanics can assist; that the inclination of the hand may be given by the cheiroplast, and the intricacies of time defined by a pendulum, and the problems of perspective resolved by a lens. Could the modern school-room be preserved like the saloons of Pompeii, it might pass in succeeding centuries for a refined inquisition. There would be found stocks for the fingers, and pulleys for the neck, and weights and engines of suspicious form and questionable purpose; and, in spite of all our vaunts of philanthropy, we might pass in future ages for the inventors of ingenious tortures.

But for what end is all this apparatus? It is certainly very right that knowledge should be simplified; that the child of the nineteenth century should profit by its illumination; and that little girls, instead of poring out their eyes at embroidered frames, should be treated as moral and intelligent beings. But where there is such over-feeding, is it possible that there can be digestion? Where there is such

an anxiety to impart brilliancy, is it not for display rather than for use?

It is quite different with boys. They are still kept, for the most part, to their old drudgery. They must still fight their way through classic lore, through crabbed grammars, and corrupt texts; they must still go to Aristotle for logic, to Newton for science, to Thucydides and to Livy for history; and though they are assisted in their difficult path by the labors of past and present generations, they must still work hard before they can reap the fruit. And better far that they should do so; that they should never avail themselves of Valpy's translations or of Hamilton's keys; but that they should encounter the fag of the student before they can carry off the glory of the scholar.

It would be well if the same principle were acted on with regard to girls; if their education were more solid and less flashy; and if, instead of sipping like butterflies at every flower, they laid in a store of useful learning for future use. For it is not to glitter in a sunbeam, and display a ceaseless variety of gay and gaudy colors, that woman should be educated; but to occupy her station with grace, and to fulfil its duties with humility.

Yet this is often too much forgotten in the whirl of employments which constitute the education of many young women. They are allowed no time to think. They acquire mechanically; and the object proposed to them is, not the satisfaction result-

ing from knowledge, or its intrinsic value; but to outvie their compeers, and to shine in society.

A little girl is in this way often, from her infancy, trained to exhibit. She competes for the prize in the morning concert, and glitters in a silver medal, the envy of her class. In the evening she shows off to an admiring circle, and her little heart dances time to her fingers, as she listens to the applauding whispers which her execution calls forth. Her infantile sketches lie upon her mother's table; and when she is summoned from her school-room, it is to play her last concerto to Mrs. A., or to show her portfolio to Lady B. And can we wonder that the same habits should continue? *Mauvaise honte* will, indeed, seldom incommode her: she may think it interesting to affect a tremor, or she may be really disturbed when a more gifted competitor carries off the palm; but her own success will ever be the object, and she will be continually on the look-out for opportunities of display. Good sense or natural diffidence may correct the error; but if the modest blush ever mantle in her cheek, if she ever shrink from exhibition, it is not her education which is in fault.

May we not to this system ascribe many of the errors of future conduct? May we not trace its effects in the different developments of female vanity? Exhibition becomes a habit which is not easily thrown aside; and its desire must, in some way or other, be gratified. It not unfrequently continues

when a better principle has been infused; and leads even religious women to step out of their sphere, and to be as ambitious of display on spiritual subjects as others are on worldly ones. And this it is that sometimes makes them not unwilling to be themselves the propagators of new opinions; for they are more anxious to attract attention than scrupulous as to the means of doing so. It is hard to give up what we have been from our infancy accustomed to; to forego a cordial which has been so perpetually administered; to be content with a quiet fulfilment of duties which bring with them no notoriety, when we have been always fed by the stimulus of praise. Yet such duties are a woman's province, and for these she should be educated. It is no more desirable that she should shine in religious debate than that she should glitter in a gay assembly; and if the latter be vain or unprofitable, the former is unsuitable and unfeminine.

But we are too apt to overlook the end of education,—that it is the formation of character, not the mere acquirement of knowledge, that is its legitimate purpose.

What a woman knows is comparatively of little importance to what a woman is. Let her mind be enlarged, and her information accurate; let her excel, if possible, in all that she does attempt, and we will find no fault with her if her accomplishments be but few. How delightful it is to meet with such a one; whose mind is well stored with useful in-

formation; who is capable of tasting intellectual beauty, and of deciding with discretion in the emergencies of life; and who is, withal, destitute of pretension. And, on the contrary, what a sad specimen of folly it is when a young woman is taught all conceivable accomplishments, and when their very number precludes the possibility of proficiency in any. She can trace Chinese figures in black and white, sketch butterflies in Indian tinting, accomplish a few romances on the guitar, a few waltzes on the piano-forte; she talks bad French and worse Italian; but she has no taste, no love of knowledge, no real desire for improvement; her mind is a mere blank; she might as well have been employed (like her grandmothers of old) in copying receipts in half-text, or working Adam and Eve upon a sampler.

It is the same in every thing. Lessons are considered the sum of education. And though it is certainly very right to have a *memoria technica* for dates, and a rhyme for the signs of the zodiac; there is more to be learnt in history than facts, and in science than terms. It is the use and application of knowledge that demands our chief attention.

What a mistake is the system we complain of with regard to religion. Yet, even in serious families, there is often too much of dry routine in religious instruction. It is communicated too much as a task, which is to be learnt, repeated, and then thrown aside. Whereas the principle should pervade every thing. Religion should be the star to

gild the young child's path, and to give zest even to her little pleasures. It should be the sunbeam to warm her tender heart, and cause it to expand towards its Creator. It should be the spring, the paramount influence, the guide, the incentive. It should be inculcated with all the affectionate sympathy of its divine Teacher, and applied with all that gentle earnestness which wins and subdues the infant mind, and chains it with the cords of love to its instructer.

We may weary our children with religious instruction, but we shall never make them love religion in this way. The probability is, that when the school-room trammels are thrown off they will throw aside its lessons, and will scarcely think themselves fully emancipated till they have forgotten all that was taught there.

Youth is the season for fixing habits. We are very careful that our children should acquire no awkward tricks; that their figures should be correctly modelled, their manners well formed, and their movements gracefully regulated; but we are not always sufficiently careful as to the habitual tone and temper of their minds. Yet do we not find that the propensities that are the soonest acquired are always the most inveterate; and that the bias, the taste, the complexion, the temperament, are, for the most part, determined in very early years?

To induce the love as well as the habit of occu-

pation,—to excite an interest, at the same time that we accustom to study,—should be our continual endeavor; and, whilst we deprecate the charlatanism that would teach every thing by cards and counters, we should relieve, as much as possible, the irksomeness of the task. And this can only be done by being ourselves in earnest. Nothing is so infectious as enthusiasm of all kinds, and especially to young people. Children naturally imbibe the feelings of their parents. The little girl who is brought up in the country, and who sees those around her interested in its occupations, dreams of snowdrops and primroses, and thinks no plaything so delightful as a spade and a parterre. And, in like manner, if she is sure that her instructers themselves care for her progress, if she can believe that they sympathize with her, she naturally shares in their ardor, and almost intuitively acquires whatever they may wish to teach.

We may learn in this from our divine Instructer. He became man that he might teach men; and we must, in spirit, identify ourselves with our children, if we would gain their interest. We must condescend to their little emotions, sympathize in their simple impressions, recall our own young feelings, and live over again our early years, if we would mould them to our wishes, and make them regard us as their friends. Nor does this require so much devotion as might be imagined. Some mothers err a little in this respect. One would scarcely find

fault with a parent for giving up too much time to her children; yet children are not the only objects of a mother's regard, and by her making them so she may in some measure defeat her own wishes. The probability is that she will render them selfish and dependent, and disqualify them from coping with those who have been nurtured with less tenderness. For as the skilful gardener knows when it is better that nature should do her own work, so does the judicious parent feel that children should sometimes be left to try their own strength, and should neither expect nor need assistance.

It is the fault not merely of indulgent, but of over-anxious parents, to treat their children too much as first objects. This is evident from their earliest years. And the little creatures are very quick at discerning their own importance. Their sayings are repeated, their talents lauded, their pleasures studied. They are suffered to interrupt and to interfere; and, though we cannot perhaps say that they are rude, we must feel that they are very troublesome. And where this treatment is pursued in childhood, it is generally continued in adolescence. The young people are the perpetual theme; their success is blazoned as if it were without precedent, —and we are wearied with hearing of their prizes or their prospects. Yet all this must have a very bad effect upon their future character; for they soon fancy themselves all that their partial friends imagine, and then they must either learn a bitter les-

seen from a harsh and censorious world, or prop themselves up in their own good opinion by an extra portion of conceit.

It is, of course, the first care of religious parents to prepare their children for their eternal state; but it is by fitting them to fill their relations here that they will best educate them for immortality. Besides the mere communication of religious truth, of what importance is it to regulate the temper and to direct the mind. How many pious persons have cause to regret their own inconsistencies; the consequence, perhaps, or irritability contracted in childhood, which in maturer years it is very difficult to correct. How often have they to lament their own inertness, the natural effect of early indulgence, which wastes and deadens the intellectual faculties, and disqualifies them for future effort. And though they may struggle against such evils, and by divine grace may be able to overcome them, they always find that bad habits are their worst enemies, and that it is much more easy to discern than to correct them.

Amiability, intelligence, and an absence of affectation, are the most delightful features in female character, and those which, next to religious principle, it is the business of education to impart. And if we would wish our children to be loved as well as admired, and esteemed as well as loved; if we would render them happy here, fortify them against the changes of life, and fit them for its close; we

must endeavor to engraft these qualities upon the solid basis of Christian truth. Religious parents will, of course, always look to a higher influence, and will feel the inadequacy of all human effort; but they will, nevertheless, diligently sow the seed, in humble hope, or, rather, in full assurance that it will be watered from above.

CHAPTER XIII.

FEMALE DUTIES.

It is not to be denied that Christianity is a practical principle; nor is it to be denied that it is the only principle that insures satisfactory practical results. Its morality is perfect, because it is universal, and because it is the natural consequence of its truths.

No woman can fulfil her social duties without being religious. We need not search antiquity for exceptions to this remark. Examples of female virtue were then sufficiently rare, and, where they did occur, the case was different. The woman who throws off religion now, as it were, invites temptation; and though worldly considerations may induce decorum and correctness, these are only negative virtues. Even where natural amiability so far prevails as to dispose to kind or benevolent effort, it is but a weak principle, apt to yield to the impulse of selfishness, and influential only when not opposed by any more potent feeling.

Christianity is practical throughout: it is so in its religious as well as in its moral obligations. It is not a mere creed, or a mere system; but a simple, sincere, practical service, intelligible to all; which all may render; and which approves itself to the conscience as the only tribute worthy of God.

Yet the fault of the religion of ordinary persons is its insincerity. Not that they are intentionally disingenuous; but they admit a casuistry in religion which they would not tolerate in any thing else.

How insincere, for instance, is that modish religion which appears, on a Sunday, in its holiday attire, and of which no vestige remains after the first service of the day is concluded; or that periodical religion which looks prim and demure at certain seasons, and which, having fasted on Good Friday, and knelt at the table on Easter Sunday, reverses the popish order, and keeps its carnival the ensuing week; or that sentimental religion which sheds a few tears at a moving discourse, and falls into hysterics at a pathetic description, and sighs and looks beautiful, especially when the preacher is young and handsome, but which has no solitary contrition, feels no real penitence, and lasts only to the church door; or indeed every religion which does not imbue and determine character, and become, as it were, a second nature, silently but sensibly influencing the detail of conduct.

It is not always easy to detect what is counterfeit. There may be much ardor even in spurious sentiment. We may be struck by glowing oratory, an apostolic profile, a melodious voice, a touching manner. We may be so deeply affected that we question not the genuineness of our emotion; and the excitement may be repeated till it becomes habitual and necessary, and we cherish it as we

would any other soft and tender agitation. Yet, though it may assume many different phases, though it may become visionary and eccentric, and its very extravagance may seem to guarantee its sincerity; its practical results are not such as to identify it with real feeling. It is vague, and desultory, and capricious; it is feverish and fickle; it is like the hectic flush, which outvies in brilliancy the hue of health, but whose very brightness is symptomatic of disease.

Real religion is full of repose. It is not indolent and inactive, but it is not restless. Its fervor is so calm and constant that it attracts little notice. It has not the vividness of the electric flash, but it burns like the beacon-light, and is as cheering and salutary.

Yet, though quiet, it is earnest. Some women deprecate the bustle of busy housewives, and imagine themselves privileged to do nothing. And, in like manner, some, condemning the extravagance of a few visionaries, think that the more cold and formal their piety, the better. They measure it by its remoteness from fanaticism; and, because they would have it unostentatious, they take care to conceal it altogether. They may be punctilious in outward observance, but they are ever on their guard against excitement; and from their extreme care lest they should be led away by feeling, it is exceedingly difficult to discover that they feel at all.

Yet these are the very persons who need be under

no apprehension. They are too cold-blooded to be ever enthusiastic, too calculating to incur risk, too inert to be extravagant. They are so dull, that to see them interested about any thing beyond a question of dress, or of household arrangement, would be a relief. But they are as dead in religion as in every other matter of feeling; and though they will join in a tirade against spiritual excess, they are unimpressible to every appeal that would excite to spiritual fervor.

Religion must be an absorbing principle. It is not enough to talk about it, or to read about it, or to range ourselves on one side or other of theological debate. We may be such exclusive advocates for morality, that we may seem to attach almost merit to its performance; or we may be so scriptural in our language, and so lucid in our views, that none may be able to challenge our profession; yet we may be far from real Christianity. Our zeal for good works may, perhaps, be only a cloak for practical antinomianism, and our orthodoxy may be merely speculative. Women have little, indeed, to do with controversy of any kind; and though it is much the fashion at present for them to stand in the front, to throw the missiles, and invite the combat; it would be more decorous, as well as more politic, that they should withdraw altogether from the field. They may seem to serve the tactics of rival leaders by skirmishing in the van, and parties may thus try their strength without hazarding their honor; but

women are, in reality, but weak champions, and nothing can be worse for themselves than to be thus engaged. It is only their defensive armor that need be proof, lest they should be harassed even in their retired position; and their religion should be so sound and practical, that though it does not render them conspicuous, it may insure their safety. And they should be so blameless in their conduct, and so active in their discharge of social duty, that they may prove the genuineness of their principles; that by these criteria, not by interference in what is altogether unsuitable, their zeal and their proficiency may be estimated.

These are indeed the test of real piety. No one must fancy herself religious who is careless of moral obligations. She may be perpetually engaged in the discussion of duty, and liberal in her application of incentives; she may not even shrink from the reproach of religion, nor from public exertions in its behalf; but she is greatly in the wrong if she imagines that any of these things can compensate for want of attention to the minutiæ of social conduct. The source of religion is the heart, and it radiates through the system; and though its diverging beams strike upon remote objects, they must fall first on those that are nearest to the centre.

The domestic circle may exhibit some of the most beautiful developments of female piety, and it affords opportunities to the youngest Christians to evidence their religion. It is, however, often not till expe-

rience teaches the fickleness of other attachments that we prize the fidelity of family love. It is not till we see how small a matter separates friends; how soon ambition breeds rivalry, and rivalry coldness and distrust; that we rightly estimate that tenderness which, in spite of perversity and neglect, watches over us, and is never weary on our behalf; encouraging our confidence, and welcoming our affection. It is not till we have experienced the selfishness of others that we prize the disinterestedness of our parents. And sometimes, alas! our sense of their value is too late. It is when they can no longer receive, and we no longer pay, the tribute of affection. It is when they are beyond the reach of all earthly sentiments, and we are left to the cold mercies of a heartless world. Few, perhaps, are the children who do not mourn over deficiencies in filial piety; who do not recall, with tender sorrow, the poor return they made to an ever-wakeful love; and who, though they may have rendered all that decorum required, do not sicken at the recollection of what they might have done, but failed to do, to soothe, to comfort, and make glad the hearts that now have ceased to beat. And how sad is it that young Christians should ever forget or think light of this most important obligation; that they should ever be led by the fascination of more exciting services to forget a duty which is close at hand, about which there can be no question, and for which there may be no future opportunity. Let them bear with

a little impatience, for it may be only over-anxiety for them. Let them bear with a little dulness, for, if they had been damped by so many disappointments, they would be dull too. Let them not count a few sacrifices dear, nor grudge their time, or their attention; nor neglect to reciprocate the tenderness which is lavished and centred upon them.

Young women are especially called to this delightful duty. It is theirs to fill the place of such as are earlier summoned from the parental home; sometimes to supply their deficiencies, and to compensate for their faults. And can any claim be more imperative? May not the minutest attention, affectionately rendered, be as much a fulfilment of duty, and as dear to God, as the more brilliant displays of erratic zeal?

Respect is the peculiar claim of parents, and to any failure in this they are very sensitive. How incumbent, then, is it on children to render that deference which is as much a right on one side as it is a duty on the other.

It is not a greater measure of spiritual light that can excuse undutiful or ungracious conduct. It is not even the conviction that we must sacrifice the lesser to the greater duty, and forsake father and mother for the Gospel's sake, that can justify our unnecessarily wounding the feelings of a parent. Remonstrance itself may be affectionate and respectful; and difference of sentiment should be urged in so delicate a way that we may, at least, show that

our religion has taught us to honor and value our natural instructers.

How often does experience give a useful though a somewhat bitter lesson. How often does it show us that what, perhaps, we once stigmatized as prejudice and lukewarmness, was only the result of chastened taste and moderated feeling; and that, if age sometimes fails to make allowance for the ardor of youth, it is the fault of youth to defer far too little to the judgment of age. How often may we afterwards find in the extravagance of others an apology for our parents' fears, and in our own mistakes a justification of their animadversions. And how often may young women, especially, learn that if they had trusted less to their own superficial knowledge, and had listened more to the counsels of experience, —if they had been less opinionative and more deferential,—they would have spared themselves the necessity of much retrograde movement, and many painful recollections of unimproved advice.

Filial piety has ever received its meed of approbation, and even poetry has not found a more affecting theme. We follow with tender interest the steps of the daughter of Œdipus, we read with admiration of the constancy of Ruth, we dwell with pleasure on the piety of Milton's children, we delight in the legend of the Siberian exile; and do we, in everyday life, meet with any more lovely and amiable character than that of the kind and dutiful and affectionate child?

There may be, indeed, many more exciting occupations—many more striking developments of religion—than the quiet discharge of filial attentions; there may be a consciousness of much greater sacrifice in the exercise of a diffused benevolence than in the routine of private duty; but though the first must not be undervalued, it is scarcely as certain an indication of real piety as the other. For it is when we see religion cementing natural ties and nurturing family affection,—prescribing the little kindnesses and the trifling sacrifices which contribute so much to domestic comfort,—teaching to forego pleasure and society for the sake of ministering to infirmity and cheering the sad and solitary hour,—that we feel her to be most attractive, and learn to appreciate her real worth.

Young women should certainly consider domestic duties as paramount to every other social obligation; but these will, in general, not interfere with more extensive usefulness. On the contrary, those who are most exemplary at home are usually the best qualified, and the most willing, to do good on a larger scale.

There are many works of charity for which women, and even young women, are peculiarly qualified; and it is therefore the more to be lamented that their benevolence is not always judiciously applied. What, for instance, can be more appropriate than assisting in schools, administering to the sick, or visiting, or reading to them under proper regu-

lation and legitimate guidance? Women may, in this way, well contribute their mite of service; and if the result of such efforts be not very important, it will, at least, be beneficial to themselves.

But is it right in them to assume higher ground, to arrogate to themselves the most important office as well as the weightiest responsibility, and to endeavor to supersede, rather than second, ministerial instruction? Is it right in them to go forth as the expounders of Holy Writ, as the liberators of troubled consciences; and afterwards, perhaps, to expatiate on their own success, as if they had been the sole teachers? Or is it right in them to throw contempt upon a sacred office by dishonoring those who hold it; and to help to depreciate sanctions which it is the fault of the present day far too lightly to esteem? How much more amiable it would be to respect the order, even when unworthily represented, and, instead of giving just cause of complaint to authorized instructers by unkind censures and unwarrantable interference, to endeavor to conciliate their sanction and co-operation. For to them should be ever given the option, at least, of appearing as the originators as well as the promoters of benevolent designs.

Female exertions should be always strictly subordinate, and especially so when there is no supineness on the part of legitimate teachers. Women should then, indeed, be scrupulously delicate; for, as probably there will be little assumption of authority in such a case, there should be the more punctilious

deference. Laborious ministers are often very meek and very sensitive, and they claim on these accounts the greater respect; yet are they not the very persons who are sometimes treated with the least consideration? Do not women, even, who perhaps owe to them the very elements of their religion, who have been encouraged by them to converse on spiritual subjects and allowed to assist in their labors, often think themselves privileged to criticise what they are not called upon to judge, to interfere where they are not required, and to speak lightly of instructions which they do not know how to appreciate? How much more decorous and proper is that conduct which asks for guidance,—which, in the distribution of books or of relief, and in the application of all benevolent efforts, is neither officious nor opinionative, but is content to conform to whatever is pointed out, and modestly and quietly to execute it.

Respect to ministers is both a religious and a social duty, but one, unhappily, too little understood and practised. It is not that enthusiastic impulse which makes an idol of every thing it admires,—which one day deifies the object of its attachment, and the next decries and deserts him; nor is it that homage which talent, or eloquence, or even sometimes superior sanctity, may call forth. But it is respect for an order appointed by God, and a reverence for all that is lovely and of good report in those who adorn it. And it produces towards such a consistent, steady, respectful, and affectionate attach-

ment; a filial feeling with regard to them, a submission to their authority, a deference to their judgment, and a willingness to receive what they have to impart. It is a want of this sentiment that renders young women more fastidious than they are teachable, fonder of comparing the merits of different ministers than of listening to their instructions, and more ready to carp at what they do not like than to gather good from what they hear. It is a want of this sentiment that makes them fickle in their attachments, unsteady in their creed, ready to be ensnared by any new and unsound doctrine, and apt to affect the heresiarch themselves. And it is the same want that has sent them, at times, to their spiritual guides, not to be taught by them, but to convince them of their errors,—not to consult them upon cases of conscience, but to enlighten them upon speculative points.

Yet all this is very lamentable; and we can scarcely wonder that some should be disposed to disallow to women, in these matters, the right of judgment at all, when it is occasionally so much abused. Dogmatism is bad in men, but it is far worse in women; and, however it may be disguised by a pretty form and a soft manner, it is a blemish which at once strikes and offends the eye.

All that women do should be done modestly. They should not act the dictator in any thing, not even in matters of benevolence. It is very much the fashion to solicit their patronage, to give them

the notoriety of office, and to invest them with a little authority. This may be politic on some accounts, and in some cases necessary; but charity, in its most unobtrusive form, is what is more becoming to female character. Women, at least, should never be meddling or important; and if they must take the lead at female committees, or preside at tables at bazars, they should do so with the least possible display. We may some of us question altogether the propriety of young women offering their gay wares at a public mart, or exacting a guinea for every bauble; we may think that they might spend their time more profitably than in making hearts-ease pincushions or wafer-toys; but if they are to do these things, let them do them without effort or affectation. It is the importance assumed on such occasions that is the chief cause of offence.

It should be always considered the duty of women to be well and actively employed; and there is ample field for the most diligent. Let not, therefore, those who waste their time in doing nothing,—who sit at home in indolence, reading a novel, or drawing a flower, or embroidering a workbag,—excuse their own inertness by the officiousness of others. The one is far more defensible than the other; the one may be moderated or corrected, and its intention is its apology; but the other must be wholly overcome, for its principle is bad. The higher the rank, and the greater the wealth, the more important it is that sympathy should be expressed and charity exercised.

Young women, of whatever degree, should never shrink from personal effort. Neither should they think, when they do enter a cottage, or teach a school, that it is an act of condescension. It is certainly very right in them to be so employed, but it is an honor to them too; and they should ever remember that the greatest privilege that attaches to superiority of any kind is to render its inferiors happy and at ease.

There is, perhaps, a greater sense of the duty now than there ever was. And if so why should there not be more effort? Why should not societies be every where established under ministerial sanction for the relief of the poor and the sick, and individual charity be thus concentrated and applied? In the detail of such societies, the assistance of women would often prove very valuable. They would, indeed, not be made the chief agitators; they would not be appointed to the most laborious or the most responsible offices; they would not be sent into districts where it is scarcely fit for modest women to appear;—but they would be directed in all cases of difficulty; and, instead of rambling about on a philanthropic crusade, they would have an assigned sphere of usefulness, and a proper and subordinate duty. The sweet Quakeress has shown what a woman can do. There would be found many such, if they were only judiciously called into action.

Yet it may not be in the power of all women to devote very much time to active efforts. These

who are married are not independent, though it is very much the fashion to consider them so; and to their duties at home all other social duties should be subordinate.

Obedience is a very small part of conjugal duty, and in most cases easily performed. Women have, indeed, not much cause to complain of their subjection; for, though they are apt very inconsiderately to deliver up their right of self-control, they suffer from this rashness, on the whole, less frequently than might be expected. Ill-assorted marriages are certainly too common; but, important as the union is, and thoughtlessly as it is often contracted, it is only wonderful that there should not be a great deal more unhappiness resulting from it than we see to be the case.

Much of the comfort of married life depends upon the lady; a great deal more, perhaps, than she is aware of. She scarcely knows her own influence; how much she may do by persuasion, how much by sympathy, how much by unremitted kindness and little attentions.

To acquire and retain such influence, she must, however, make her conjugal duties her first object. She must not think that any thing will do for her husband, that any room is good enough for her husband, that it is not worth while to be agreeable when there is only her husband, that she may close her piano, or lay aside her brush, for why should she play or paint merely to amuse her husband? No:

she must consider all these little arts of pleasing chiefly valuable on his account,—as means of perpetuating her attractions and giving permanence to his affection. She must remember that her duty consists not so much in great and solitary acts, in displays of the sublimer virtues, to which she will be only occasionally called, but in trifles,—in a cheerful smile, or a minute attention, naturally rendered, and proceeding from a heart full of kindness and a temper full of amiability.

There is one class of duties which, as it went out with our grandmothers, is now considered quite obsolete. We wonder, indeed, how these venerable ladies could be so familiar with the pantry and yet never soil their petticoats; how they could preside over the culinary department, and be adepts in every domestic art, and yet be still as stately as their ruffles or brocade. Ladies were in those days accountable for every dish; they smiled with conscious triumph when the sauce was praised; they made currant-wine and raspberry vinegar; and their cupboards were stored with expressed juices and ingenious confections. But now there is something inelegant that attaches to the household arrangement. It is associated with making puddings, or mending stockings, or scolding servants. A good housewife is a good sort of bustling person, who has always a good dinner and a clean house; who jingles a bunch of keys, and gasps for an opportunity of replenish-

ing your plate; and who looks at the head of her table, as if she should be in the kitchen.

The habits of a former age would certainly not be in keeping with the refinement of the present; and a lady may, no doubt, be better employed than in superseding her servants. But there is no greater mistake than imagining that there is any thing derogatory in entering, when necessary, on even practical detail, or that it is not incumbent on every woman, whatever be her degree, to take care that these details are well conducted.

Ease is the distinction of true breeding. The most lady-like deportment is not inconsistent with perfect economy. It is delightful to see such a union; it conveys a tone to the whole establishment; and you feel assured that the dairy and the drawing-room are equally in order.

But, on the contrary, there is no worse breeding than to be ashamed of any thing you may feel it to be your duty to do. "Never blush, my love," said the elegant Mrs. Chapone to a young wife whom she detected making a tart, "to do any thing which may please your husband, promote economy, or embellish your table." It may be that your fortune does not allow your devolving on a housekeeper the dispensing of your stores, or on a governess the care of your children; that you have no lady's maid to make your caps, and no French cook to season your omelettes; and yet, if you are surprised in any of these little offices, you are sadly discomposed.

You retire from your press, or send away your children, or secrete your work; just as if it were a breach of etiquette to be discovered any where but on a sofa, or doing any thing which is of any use.

And this affectation descends even to a lower rank. What can be more absurd than to dine at tables of very moderate establishments, to taste delicious confections, and to be quite sure that you are indebted for them to the lady of the house,—that, at least, she made the jelly and whisked the cream,—and yet to know that she would blush to be suspected conversant with the ingredients of a single dish?

It must be confessed, that the menage is not the most interesting part of female duty. Its detail is often trying. We feel that there are a great many things which we would rather not look into, a great many blemishes which we would rather not observe; that we would prefer, almost, the consciousness of a little disorder to the annoyance of interfering to set things right; and that, in short, we would often rather ourselves dust the table than ring the bell. But these are the little trials that devolve upon woman. They are her share of the burden, and she should, therefore, not shrink from it. And they are common to all; for the lady of rank is as responsible for the good conduct of her establishment, as the poor man's wife is for the neatness of her cottage.

We are all sensible to the impressions which a want of order produces. A coup d'œil suffices. We are kept, for instance, in the first place, half an

hour ringing at the bell; we are then ushered into a cold apartment by a blundering footboy or a slip-shod maid, and are left to note its mal-arrangement whilst the lady of the house is adjusting her costume; and when, at last, we are allowed to pay her our compliments, we are concerned to discover that, in her haste to descend, she has left one papillote untwisted, and one unhappy cordon dangling at her side. We sympathize with the poor husband, and in pity to his feelings make a point of declining his invitation to dinner.

The consideration in which a woman is held depends, however, much on these little points. A silver saucepan is not indeed now an item in the *corbeille de mariage;* nor do modern husbands wish that their ladies' boudoir should be made a pastry room; but none are careless of the conduct of their house or the arrangement of their table. None like to see the one in disorder or the other ill-furnished. The commissariat department devolves upon the lady, and nothing goes on well if it is poorly supplied. A bad dinner has a bad effect upon the temper, even when there is, on the whole, a superiority to trifles. We have heard, indeed, of Sir Isaac Newton's insensibility to the abstraction of his chicken, and of his returning to his problem equally content without it; but we doubt whether any modern student would be as indifferent. Besides, husbands will sometimes bring home stray acquaintances to dinner; and why should they have, on

such occasions, to blush for their wives' deficiencies?

A neglect of minute attentions is always a dangerous experiment. There is nothing so fatal to sentiment as discomfort. The love that is whispered to an elegant young woman in a delicious parterre is forgotten when she appears in a bedgown at the breakfast table, and dispenses to her shivering husband cold coffee and blue milk. How different his lot from that of the more privileged bachelor, whose nice housekeeper sets out his table, and never soils his carpet; and who, if tempted to leave his quiet habitation, and compare his solitary condition with the matrimonial felicity of his friend, finds the unhappy Benedick overwhelmed with children and resigned to discomfort.

The most anxious, however, if not the most important duty of married life, is that which is due to children, and which in their early years principally devolves upon the mother. None can supply her place, none can feel her interest; and as in infancy a mother is the best nurse, so in childhood she is the best guardian and instructress. Let her take what help she may, nothing can supersede her own exertions. She must give the tone to character; she must infuse the principle; she must communicate those first lessons which are never forgotten, and which bring forth fruit, good or evil, according as the seed may be.

Instruction is not without its trials. We have

heard, in poetry, how delightful it is to "rear the tender thought;" but we doubt whether any of us can altogether sympathize with the beau ideal of the bard. In spite of Bell and Pestalozzi, it must ever be a work of patience to teach grammar and orthography.

How needful then is a mother's interest. She may not be herself required to impart the elements of knowledge; but it is hers to give life to the system, to regulate the temper, to turn the little incidents of a child's life into so many useful lessons. It is hers to watch the early bias, to infuse into the lisping prattler a scrupulous regard to truth, to teach the first breathings of the infant spirit to ascend to heaven.

And well is her care repaid. On whom does the infant smile so sweetly as on its mother? To whom do the little boy and girl fly so naturally for sympathy as to their mother? And often, in after-life, does not youth repose its confidence securely on a mother, and seek the counsel of a mother's faithful heart, and hide its griefs in a mother's tender bosom? It is a delightful relationship; and if mothers would secure the love and respect of their children, they must not grudge their attentions to them in their earliest years. They must be willing to sacrifice a little amusement, or a little company, or a little repose, for the sake of nursing their infants, or teaching their children, or fulfilling them-

selves offices which too frequently they devolve on servants.

To accomplish, however, these duties, a woman must be domestic. Her heart must be at home. She must not be on the look-out for excitement of any kind, but must find her pleasure as well as her occupation in the sphere which is assigned to her.

St. Paul knew what was best for woman when he advised her to be domestic. He knew that home was her safest place, home her appropriate station. He knew especially the dangers to which young women are exposed, when, under any pretence, they fly from home. There is composure at home; there is something sedative in the duties which home involves. It affords security not only from the world, but from delusions and errors of every kind. A woman who lives much at home hears the rumors merely of conflicts which perplex and agitate all who are involved in them. Opinions are presented to her, not dressed up with all the witchery of eloquence, and fresh from the mouth of their propounder, but divested of extrinsic attractions, and in their true garb. She entertains them with a mind not fevered by excitement nor athirst for stimulus, but prepared to weigh every thing impartially, and pre-occupied by important themes.

How preferable is the quiet lot of such a one, when really religious, to the most brilliant which this world can offer. She has set her footing on the Rock, and she will never be moved from it.

Her faith is firm, as that on which it reposes. It is not that vague sentiment, which scarcely knows what it believes. It is not that fickle sentiment, which adopts the newest dogma, whatever it may be. It is not that vapid sentiment, which feels every thing or nothing, just as the world dictates. But it is a faith founded upon Scripture,—that bends to the authority of Scripture, however set at nought, that receives the doctrine of Scripture, however contemned, that recognises the obligations of Scripture, however mystified or explained away. It is a faith which, conscious of its own weakness, rests on Almighty strength,—feeling its own wants, flies to Infinite sufficiency,—which with filial confidence carries its cares to the mercy-seat of Heaven, and rests assuredly on Him in whom it has believed.

And how will such a faith be evidenced? By composure under trials, by a modest fulfilment of duty, by a heavenly walk, by a happy death. Yes, it is then that the Christian really triumphs. The spirit that has animated for a while the tabernacle of clay, that has prompted to benevolence, that has stimulated to self-denial, that has striven and struggled and suffered under its load of flesh, then breaks from its prison and finds its repose. Then it meets with those with whom it long has held communion, whose temptations, and trials, and constancy, have been the same, and whose home will be the same forever.

And let it encourage the female Christian that

many have preceded her in her godly course,—that Ruth, and Hannah, and Mary, and Dorcas, and Priscilla, and other holy women, have led the way, —that they have striven, and have prevailed,—have believed, and been accepted,—that they have received their crown of glory, and are with the spirits of the just made perfect. And let her go, and be like them.

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